



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Fall is a great time to catch fish in Iowa's rivers

Enjoy Iowa's natural landscapes fishing Iowa's rivers and streams this fall. A unique angling challenge is hidden around every bend.

"You are never far from one of Iowa's many rivers," said Greg Gelwicks, Iowa DNR interior rivers research biologist. "Fall is a great time to give them a try."

Fish become more active as the stream temperature drops. "Look for actively feeding fish where riffles enter pools or rocky areas," Gelwicks said. "They can sit there out of the current and wait for food to come by."

Find catfish, walleye, sauger and bass close to natural or manmade habitat features such as riffles, log-jams or rock. Smaller fish like shiners and minnows are attracted to hiding and resting spaces found within habitat features and predators feed around these features.

Small "up-river" segments of interior rivers can be fantastic for walleye and smallmouth bass in early fall. Use crankbaits and spinners to catch smallmouth bass and crankbaits or jigs with crawlers for walleye.

Later in the fall, switch to a jig and minnow on deeper pools. Try the upper Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan and Linn counties) or upper Cedar River (Black Hawk and Bremer counties) for smallmouth bass. The Shell Rock River (Butler and Bremer counties) or upper Cedar Rivers (Black Hawk or Bremer Counties) are a great choice for walleye.

"The Missouri and Mississippi rivers boast some of the best flathead catfishing in the Midwest," said Jon Christensen, DNR natural resources technician.

The Missouri River's swift current, rocks and snags are good habitat and food is abundant for these predatory catfish. Use live fish as bait; green sunfish and bullheads tend to survive best on the hook.

"Blue catfish are becoming more common in the Missouri River along Iowa's western border," said Christensen. Several state record fish have been caught on the Missouri River, including the blue catfish (101 pounds) and channel catfish (38 pounds 2 ounces).

An extensive list of Iowa's rivers, with information on access points and native species, is available on the DNR website at [fishing.iowadnr.gov](http://fishing.iowadnr.gov).

**Media Contact:** Greg Gelwicks, Interior Rivers Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

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## Iowa's archery deer season begins Oct. 1

An estimated 60,000 hunters will be heading to the timber in the next few weeks as Iowa's archery deer season gets underway Oct. 1.

Forest wildlife research biologist Jim Coffey with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources said hunters who spend time on preseason scouting should improve their chance for success later this fall.

"Deer are habitual animals – their traditional trails now will be traditional trails later this fall and with all the rain over much of the state hunters have the opportunity to see the deer trails in the mud," he said. "Even though food is plentiful now, hunters should still pattern the food sources and bedding areas."

One food source deer will likely key on is acorns from white oak trees and Coffey said the white oaks in southern Iowa had an excellent crop this year.

"Once you identify hunting areas, take advantage of the leaves being on the trees, knowing that once the leaves fall it will look a lot different to both hunters and the deer. It's that time in the stand observing nature, seeing what makes the squirrels start barking or what it means when blue jays are calling that improves your skills as a hunter," Coffey said. "Check your shooting lanes from both the ground and from the tree stand because it will look a lot different depending your angle."

Coffey also advised hunters to inspect their tree stand and safety harness before heading out.

"Make sure to check the straps and tighten the bolts on the tree stand and try on the safety harness to make sure it still fits. If it's worn out or no longer fits, get it replaced. No one wants their hunt to end because they fell out of a tree stand," he said.

Part of preseason scouting includes preparing for a successful harvest. If planning to hunt in early October, or anytime the temperature is warm, hunters should bring large chunks of ice to put in the deer cavity to cool the meat. Freezing gallon milk jugs with water is a method often used by hunters. Then, get it to the locker as soon as possible.

Bow hunters harvested an estimated 23,000 deer in 2017. Iowa's archery deer season is Oct. 1 to Nov. 30 and Dec. 17 to Jan. 10, 2019. Hunters who harvest a deer are required by law to report it by midnight of the day after the deer is recovered. Harvest may be reported online at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov), by phone at the toll-free number printed on the harvest report tag or through a license vendor during their regular business hours.

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## Bowhunters encouraged to practice the ABCs of tree stand safety

Tree stand accidents can happen to deer hunters regardless of skill level or experience and result in serious injury or even death. Unfortunately, in nearly every case, these incidents were preventable.

To help prevent injuries, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with Tree Stand Safety Awareness, is encouraging hunters to practice the ABC's of Tree Stand Safety.

Always remove and inspect your equipment

Buckle on your full-body harness

Connect to the tree before your feet leave the ground

"Hunters should take tree stand safety seriously, every time you hunt from, hang, or move a tree stand. By performing these three simple steps, tree stand users can virtually eliminate their risk of falling to the ground as the majority of falls occur outside the stand," said Megan Wisecup, hunter education administrator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Nationally, the estimated number of falls from tree stands requiring emergency room visits decreased by 28 percent in 2017. In Iowa last year, there were four tree stand incidents and all resulted in injury.

"That's a significant, positive move on the tree stand injury prevention front but we still have room for improvement," Wisecup said.

**Media Contact:** Megan Wisecup, Hunter Education Administrator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-238-4968 or Jeff Barnes, Recreation Safety Officer, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-290-4907.

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## Public meetings set to discuss chronic wasting disease

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a series of meetings in early October to discuss the changes and new focus areas to its efforts to prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Iowa's deer herd.

Meetings are scheduled for Oct. 4, from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Wayne County Fairgrounds 4H building in Corydon; Oct. 8, from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Correctionville Community Center, in Correctionville; Oct. 9, from 2-3:30 p.m., at Bass Pro Shops in Council Bluffs; and Oct. 9, from 6:30-8 p.m., Mills County Conservation Nature Center, in Pacific Junction. The meetings are open to the public.

The Iowa DNR added three new deer management zones and a January antlerless deer season in Wayne, Allamakee and Clayton counties. Appanoose County will be part of the January antlerless season. It also increased the number of deer tissue samples in the counties along the Missouri River that borders Nebraska due to deer testing positive for the disease last year in Nebraska.

"We will discuss the increased surveillance effort and how hunters can help us just by doing what they do – hunting deer," Haindfield said. "These meetings will also allow hunters and landowners an opportunity to get their questions answered and to discuss their concerns with our staff."

The Iowa DNR will present information on CWD, inform the public about increased surveillance sampling of deer from counties along the river, and request help from deer hunters for tissue samples during the upcoming fall and winter deer seasons.

There are several things hunters can do to stop or slow the spread of CWD, Haindfield said, including not leaving the deer carcass on the landscape or using feed or salt-mineral to attract deer.

"The first and most important thing hunters can do is to allow sampling of hunter harvested deer," he said. "Deer hunting is an important tradition and, for some, a large part of their identity. It is also important to us and we need to work together to combat this disease. Our goal is to provide quality deer hunting for future generations."

CWD is a neurological disease belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. It attacks the brain of infected deer and elk causing the animals to lose weight, display abnormal behavior, lose body functions and die. It is always fatal to the infected animal.

The Iowa DNR has more information about CWD and other infectious disease online at [www.iowadnr.gov/cwd](http://www.iowadnr.gov/cwd).

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](mailto:Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov), and advise of specific needs.

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