



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2019

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Fish hatcheries busy netting walleye

Moravia – The late night, annual walleye collection started April 6 at Rathbun Lake and April 7 at Storm Lake. Crews with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Bureau have been setting gillnets at night looking for walleyes ready to spawn.

Walleye collection is tentatively scheduled to start April 13 at Clear Lake and the Iowa Great Lakes.

Hatcheries will operate around the clock as workers bring in the nightly haul well past midnight. The eggs are removed from the walleyes in the morning and the fish are returned to the lake where they were caught to make room for the next night's catch.

Media Contact: Jay Rudacille, DNR Warm and Coolwater Fish Culture Supervisor, 641-647-2406

Space available in upcoming hunter education classes

Hunter Education Classroom courses are offered by knowledgeable and certified volunteer instructors and Iowa Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers. Classroom courses are typically 12-15 hours in length and are held over 2 to 3 sessions (days). In order to receive certification, a student must attend all sessions and pass the final exam.

Iowa law requires that anyone born after January 1, 1972 must be certified in hunter education before they are eligible to purchase an Iowa hunting license.

Upcoming Hunter Education Classes

April 9, Algona, Kossuth County Conservation Board

April 11, Ionia, Twin Ponds Nature Center

April 23, DeWitt, Wapsi Valley Ikes

April 26, Durant, Durant Community School

April 27, Stratford, Izaak Walton League - Boone Valley

May 8, Independence, Buchanan County Wildlife Association

May 9, Oskaloosa, Mahaska County Environmental Center

May 11, Blue Grass, Oak Hills Gun Club

May 16, Marshalltown, Izaak Walton League

May 28, Sioux Center, Sioux County Conservation Board, Sandy Hollow

For more information on these and other hunter education opportunities, go to www.iowadnr.gov/huntered

Annual spring wildlife survey underway

Ordinarily, a slow moving vehicle at night in the Iowa countryside spotlighting deer, raccoons or coyotes would send Iowans to their phone, speed-dialing their local conservation officer, but in this case, it may be the officer doing the shining.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) annual spring spotlight survey is underway with Wildlife and Law Enforcement staff conducting nighttime counts of all furbearing animals, and white-tailed deer.

The survey begins in early spring an hour after sunset, preferably on a night with a clear sky, low wind and high humidity. Each county has a preselected route covering 50 miles of varying habitat. Surveyors will follow the route driving below 20 miles per hour, shining spotlights from both sides of the vehicle.

But step one for the survey is to alert the local county sheriff of the activity, in case they get any suspicious vehicle calls.

“This is a big effort,” said Tyler Harms, wildlife researcher with the Iowa DNR who collects the data from all of the routes. “This survey is the primary way we count deer and a major source of population data for our skunks, badgers, opossum, red fox, coyotes and other furbearers.”

The survey routes were designed to include all types of habitats found on the Iowa landscape in an effort to not skew the number of animals counted in either way.

“We include river bottoms, prairie habitat, farm fields, pastures, timber stands and acreages on our routes, so we can collect information on which habitat types these species prefer most,” said Harms.

The spring spotlight survey began in the late 1970s as a raccoon-only survey to determine if there was any impact of increased harvest on the population during a time

of high pelt prices. Over time, it transitioned to include all furbearers and deer.

“Data collected from this survey are used as one factor to estimate deer populations and provide valuable information for making management decisions for our furbearer species,” Harms said.

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