



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa DNR accepting comments on proposed walleye length limit changes on the Mississippi River

Des Moines - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is accepting comments on proposed changes to walleye length limits on the Mississippi River, through March 5.

The DNR is proposing to extend current length limits in Mississippi River Pools 12-20 to include the entire Mississippi River in Iowa. This change will reflect regulation changes in Minnesota and Wisconsin waters of Pool 9-12. If approved, the entire Iowa/Wisconsin and Iowa/Illinois Mississippi River boundary waters will have the same walleye regulations.

Currently, all Mississippi River Pools have a 15-inch minimum walleye length limit. Additionally, all 20 to 27 inch long walleye caught from Mississippi River Pools 12 through 20 must be immediately released alive, and no more than one walleye greater than 27 inches long may be taken per day.

Comments on the proposed length limit change may be submitted through March 5 via email to fisheries@dnr.iowa.gov, or by mail to Joe Larscheid, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319-0034.

The Iowa DNR has scheduled listening sessions from noon to 2 p.m., March 5 at three locations where individuals may convey their comments if they choose. Attendees will be asked to give their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the content of the proposed length limit change. Locations include:

- Driftless Area Education & Visitors Center, 1944 Columbus Road, Lansing
- Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road, Peosta
- Lucille A. Carver Mississippi Riverside Environmental Research Station (LACMRERS), 3388 Highway 22, Muscatine

Any person attending these sessions 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.

Public meeting on fatal deer disease set for March 10 in Leon

Leon, Iowa - Deer hunters who hunt in Decatur County take note— chronic wasting disease has shown up in your area. A hunter harvested wild deer taken during the first shotgun season in Decatur County has tested positive for chronic wasting disease.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has scheduled a meeting on March 10, at 7 p.m., in the Central Decatur CSD, 1201 NE Poplar, in Leon, to discuss the status of chronic wasting disease in Iowa and how deer hunters can help stop or slow the spread of this disease.

Tyler Harms, wildlife biologist for the Iowa DNR, will coordinate the meeting. He said there are several things hunters can do today to help monitor for the disease.

“The first and most important is to allow sampling of hunter harvested deer,” he said. “Second, is to remove any mineral blocks and feeders that unnaturally concentrates deer and increases the chance of spreading any disease and finally report any sick or emaciated deer to the DNR.

“We want people to come to this meeting, ask their questions, hear the concerns from other hunters,” Harms 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 today, tomorrow, and for future generations.”

The Iowa DNR has tested nearly 74,000 deer tissue samples for chronic wasting disease since monitoring began in 2002. The disease first appeared in Iowa’s wild deer herd in 2013. So far, there have been 89 positive tests.

The Iowa DNR sets an annual goal of collecting 6,900 deer tissue samples. The effort has focused on portions of northeast and eastern Iowa near Wisconsin, Illinois, and south-central Iowa near Missouri, where the disease has been detected. Additional testing has been conducted in Pottawattamie, Cerro Gordo and Davis counties, following positive tests from captive facilities. All counties have at least 15 samples collected annually. The disease has been found in every state around Iowa.

Chronic wasting disease is a neurological disease belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, 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.

“Deer hunting is one of Iowa’s great traditions. We want to educate and work with our hunters so we continue to have the best deer herd in the country for generations to

come," he said.

The Iowa DNR has more information about chronic wasting disease and other infectious disease online at www.iowadnr.gov/cwd.

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