



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Man found in Lake Ahquabi identified

INDIANOLA, Iowa –A man found dead in Lake Ahquabi on Sunday, June 27, 2021 has been positively identified as Joshua Sweeden, 33, of Indianola.

The Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner performed an autopsy on Monday, June 28, on Sweeden but the official cause of death has not yet been determined, pending further investigation and autopsy results.

On Sunday, June 27, 2021, at approximately 10:15am, a body was spotted floating in Lake Ahquabi approximately 20 yards from shore in the beach/swimming area.

DNR Parks staff, Warren County Sheriff's Office deputies and other medical personnel responded to the scene, located the body and brought it ashore.

The body was transported to the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner in Ankeny.

Water safety heading into the warm Fourth of July weekend

JOHNSTON, Iowa – The Johnston-Grimes Metropolitan Fire Department, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Polk County Health Department, Iowa State Patrol and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be available on Wednesday, June 30 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lakeview Boat Ramp, located off NW Beaver Drive to provide water safety tips for Iowans heading into the Fourth of July weekend.

WHEN: Wednesday, June 30, 2021

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Lakeview Boat Ramp, located off NW Beaver Drive in Johnston

WHO: Johnston-Grimes Metropolitan Fire Department, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Polk County Health Department, Iowa State Patrol and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Subject matter experts will be available to answer questions related to the following items.

Johnston-Grimes Metropolitan Fire Department

Captain Tristan Johnson

- Having a way to call for help in the event of an emergency
- Steps to take and provide emergency crews if someone goes underwater
- Maintaining situational awareness while on the water
- Response capabilities and emergency response teams responding
- Importance of wearing a life jacket at all times

Iowa DNR

Susan Stocker, Boating Law Admin/Education Coordinator

Nate Anderson, DNR Conservation Officer

Todd Robertson, DNR Rivers Outreach Coordinator – safety while paddling

- General water safety
- Avoiding alcohol while boating
- Effects of heat, sun exposure and reaction times
- Minimum age for children that have to wear a life jacket when the vessel is underway
- Life jacket demonstrations
- Age requirements for boat operation
- Boater education courses/certifications
- Boat accidents/reporting
- Unlawful operation
- Paddlesports and the awareness needed

Polk County Health Department

Nola Aigner Davis, Public Health Communications Officer

- Ticks are most active during warmer months.
- Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals.
- Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.
- Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and daypacks.
- Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tick-borne diseases.

Iowa State Patrol & Johnston Police Department

Alex Dinkla, Iowa State Patrol PIO

- Avoid drinking and driving while operating a boat
- Avoid driving after enjoying recreational activities if alcohol is involved
- Cellular phone usage

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Greg Hand, Park Ranger

- New federal requirement for the use of vessel cut-off switch on vessels less than 26 feet
- Life jacket loaner stations at USACE Reservoirs
- Required safety equipment on vessels operating on federal waters
 - Life vests
 - Throwable flotation devices
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Sound producing devices
 - Visual distress signals
 - Navigation lights

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Janet Wilwerding, Communications Specialist, Office: 515.727.7781, Cell: 515.414.0662, email: jwilwerding@cityofjohnston.com

Iowa's Scholastic Clay Target Program crowns youth sporting clays champions

252 athletes from 30 Iowa teams participated in the 2021 Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Skeet Championships held June 24-27 at the New Pioneer Gun Club in Waukee.

The PC Eagles took home 1st place Women's Individual and top Varsity Squad in skeet, while the Pella Shooters Club team took home first place men's varsity individual, as well as 3rd and 4th place varsity squads in skeet. Find a complete list of all results online at <https://app.sssfonline.com/nationals/2942> .

Men's Varsity Individual Skeet

1. Alec VandeNoord, Pella Shooters Club
2. Noah De Boef, PC Eagles
3. Michael Lemburg, Pleasant Valley
4. Nathan Romans, Pleasant Valley

5. Carver Van Zee, Pella Shooters Club
6. Carson Simon, Oskaloosa Shooting Team

Women's Varsity Individual Skeet

1. Emily Uitermarkt, PC Eagles
2. Haley Starmer, Pella Shooters
3. Erin Neppel, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars
4. Bailey Oliver, Des Moines Clay Crushers
5. Elizabeth Eisenbarth, Pella Shooters Club
6. Jenna Smith, Mt. Pleasant Panthers

Skeet Varsity Squads

1. Pella Christian Eagles, 581 points
2. Ankeny Centennial Jaguars, 574 points
3. Pella Shooters Green Squad, 572 points
4. Pleasant Valley, 569 points
5. Pella Shooters Club White Squad, 565 points

Iowa's SCTP teams that participated in the State Championship are eligible to attend the SCTP National Championships held at the Cardinal Center in Marengo, Ohio July 8-17.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program in Iowa, contact Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator at 515-313-8048 or chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

Mystery ailment impacting birds inching westward

Since May, state agencies, wildlife rehabilitators, and animal control operators in the Mid-Atlantic United States have received a sharp uptick in reports of sick or dead songbirds.

Grackles, starlings, robins, and blue jays seem particularly vulnerable to this mystery ailment, which causes swollen and crusty eyes and neurologic signs, like disorientation, tremors, and loss of balance. To date, a definitive cause has not been identified and the number of affected states has expanded west to Indiana.

At this point wildlife experts cannot rule out some linkage to the Brood X cicada emergence event, as areas with affected birds largely overlap. Biologists in affected states are recommending that residents take down their bird feeders to reduce the possibility of congregating birds and facilitating disease spread.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is tracking this situation and has received no reports of unusual avian morbidity (sickness) or mortality (death) events within the state.

“At this time there is no need to remove bird feeders in Iowa, however we encourage the public to remain vigilant by reporting any unusual sightings of five or more affected birds,” said Dr. Rachel Ruden, state wildlife veterinarian with the Iowa DNR. Reports may be sent to Ruden at rachel.ruden@dnr.iowa.gov or avian ecologist Anna Buckardt Thomas at anna.buckardt@dnr.iowa.gov.

Media Contact: Rachel Ruden, State Wildlife Veterinarian, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-823-8544.

Counting turkeys

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for help with its annual wild turkey production survey. During the months of July and August wild turkey sightings are recorded to estimate this year’s nesting rates and nest success.

Participation is easy – just note the date and county in which the turkey was seen, if it was an adult female or adult male – males have beards on their breast – and if and how many poults (baby turkeys) were present. There is a link to the online survey and field survey card at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2115256/iowawildturkeyreports> for those willing to help.

Each year the DNR mails survey cards to select turkey hunters who are asked to provide production information on turkeys they seen. If you did not receive a survey card, you are still encouraged to report turkey sightings using the Iowa DNR webpage link.

Annual population surveys conducted by the DNR are an important component of managing the wild turkey. Turkey populations can fluctuate annually across all regions of the state. All participation is appreciated.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958.

DNR forecasts Iowa’s 2021 fall pheasant population to be similar to 2020

If Iowa pheasant hunters liked the hunting they had in 2020, they should like it again in 2021. Based on the annual pheasant nesting forecast, Iowa’s pheasant population should be similar to slightly higher than last year, said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Bogenschutz bases the forecast on a model using 1961-90 winter and spring weather data to predict hen pheasant survival. For the 2020-21 winter, much of Iowa was as at or above normal snowfall totals, which likely reduced hen pheasant survival. The April-May spring was significantly dryer than normal across the state with indicates that the hens that survived probably had a good hatch.

“Given the information, our weather model is predicting pheasant population will be unchanged to slightly higher in 2021,” he said. “I expect there to be regional differences given the weather – populations might be up quite a bit in northwestern part of Iowa, but likely quite a bit lower in the southeastern part of the state. With winter ice reported across much of southern Iowa, I expect quail numbers will be lower than last year.”

While the weather model offers a prediction of the fall’s population, the DNR’s annual August roadside survey is the best gauge of what upland populations will be this fall. The survey results will be posted at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey around Sept. 15.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plays an important role in providing habitat for pheasants and quail. The USDA is expected to restart the general CRP signup next week. For more information about CRP visit the DNR’s website www.iowadnr.gov/habitat. CRP lands enrolled in the DNR’s Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) have increased and offer excellent hunting in addition to Iowa’s other public lands. The IHAP program provides incentives to help landowners with pheasant and quail habitat in exchange for public hunter access. For more information on IHAP visit www.iowadnr.gov/ihap.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.