

July 25 Iowa Outdoors

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Two charged after reports of shots fired

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY, Iowa – Iowa Department of Natural Resources state park rangers have charged two hunters after a tip was reported by fishermen of shots fired at Lake Manawa on July 22.

Approximately 12:52 a.m. on July 22, DNR state park rangers conducted a traffic stop on Gifford Road in Council Bluffs, in reference to the gunshots heard. Sein Ram, 37, and Gungsar Yungtang, 17, both of Omaha, stated they were rabbit hunting with a flash light from a motor vehicle.

At that time, both Ram and Yungtang were cited for hunting by artificial light, hunting without a non-resident hunting license, and illegal attempt to take game (rabbits). During the traffic stop, a .22 caliber rifle, ammunition and a flash light were seized.

After further investigation of the scene, a deceased female whitetail deer was found with multiple gunshot wounds. The Iowa DNR found a blood trail consistent with being shot from the roadway. A .22 caliber bullet was recovered from the deer carcass.

Iowa DNR park rangers met with Ram again later that day and charged him with failure to have a non-resident antlerless deer license, abandonment of dead or injured wildlife, illegal method of take, shooting a firearm over a roadway, and trespassing. Ram received warnings for prohibited hunting near an occupied building, refusal to exhibit catch to an officer, shooting

a deer out of season, use of a motor vehicle for deer hunting, and manner of conveyance for having a loaded weapon in a vehicle.

Yungtang was fined \$450. Ram was fined \$3,808.70.

The public is encouraged to report any suspicious activity through the Iowa DNR Turn In Poachers (TIP) hotline at 1-800-532-2020.

Note: A criminal charge is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Media contact: Aaron Johnson, DNR Park Ranger at (402) 980-3929



Small, seasonal wetlands have returned to the Eagle Lake area, serving as nesting habitat for ducks and as a filter for water before it enters the lake. Photo by the Iowa DNR.

Eagle Lake Wildlife Area is quietly becoming a really big deal

ESTHERVILLE, Iowa - Eagle Lake is a survivor.

The 290-acre natural shallow lake on the Iowa-Minnesota border in northern Emmet County staved off being drained entirely in the early 1900s by a newly formed drainage district on the lake's south side.

While the southern part of the lake disappeared beneath a mix of annual crops and pasture for 50 years, in the 1950s the Iowa Conservation Commission (the agency that would be merged with others to become the Department of Natural Resources) began to reassemble it piece by piece and by 1985, all of the parcels were under public ownership.

Eagle Lake was again a shallow lake surrounded by a narrow strip of old pasture and crop ground, but something wasn't right.

"This was an important stopover for migrating water birds but the big thing it was missing was upland nesting cover and semi-permanent and seasonal wetlands," said Bryan Hellyer, wildlife biologist for the Iowa DNR at the Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit.

That missing piece began to slowly change in the mid to late 1990s when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquired a 98-acre tract on the northwest edge of the lake.

Then in 2007, the development pace shifted from turtle to teal.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began adding adjacent parcels from landowners willing to sell.

This was when Eagle Lake potential turned into Eagle Lake reality.

A newly acquired 465 acres of land included 25 smaller natural seasonal wetlands just waiting to come back. The bulk of the acquisition was reseeded to native Iowa prairie. Combining the prairie and healthy wetlands has been a boon for migrating and resident wildlife.

"It's all about water quality, that's what I love about wetlands, they filter water and everything uses them," Hellyer said. "We've added a buffer nearly around the entire lake that will continue to improve its water quality. We're getting the area back to what it once was."

The 865-acre Eagle Lake Wildlife Management Area is attractive to more than ducks and pheasants. It brings in shorebirds, bobolinks, Eastern meadowlarks, goldfinches, tiger salamanders, prairie skinks, turtles, bees, monarchs, dragonflies, damselflies and more. Six pairs of Forester's terns have been seen here. So have multiple adult and young eared grebes.

"We haven't scratched our potential here yet," Hellyer said. "We started at a great place with the lake. I'm glad we could add on."

That potential extends to other uses, too.

"It's an excellent area to canoe and kayak, for birdwatching. It would be a great classroom for school groups," Hellyer said. "Pheasant hunting has increased dramatically, which has benefitted the local sporting goods stores, hotels, and restaurants."

Kirk family farm changes from black dirt to wetlands and prairie

Much of the new prairie and wetlands had been part of the Jim and Lavonne Kirk farm. After Jim passed, Lavonne sat down with Hellyer to discuss the possibility of selling their 40 acre pasture for public use.

She decided to sell the whole farm.

Lavonne Kirk initially enrolled the farm into the Wetland Reserve Program where it was purchased by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for its appraised value. A few years later, she sold the family's remaining 80 acres along the south edge of the Eagle Lake complex at auction where the Heritage Foundation bought it.

"Obviously the family has quite a bit of attachment to the land," Hellyer said. "She has been out to visit it, to see the progress. She told me she was happy that we acquired it and to see it permanently protected."

Prairie plant diversity is important and the 865-acre complex is home to rattlesnake master, rough prairie star, purple coneflower, native indigo, prairie blazing star, butterfly milkweed, Canada milk vegetation, and much more.

With dickcissels singing in the background, the seven year prairie old is starting to find itself and functioning like an ecosystem, Hellyer said.

Pheasants now have a place to rear their young in the summer, and to escape bad weather in the winter. Ducks can nest on one of the many small wetlands then move to the larger lake when their broods are ready.

A young buck lay hidden for as long as he could suddenly sprang up and bounded west across the marsh to the safety of the oak savannah.

"You'll have all those things on the landscape if you have the water quality," he said. "We tend to focus more on ducks and pheasants but boy we've created a pretty cool thing here."

Media Contact: Bryan Hellyer, Wildlife Management Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-330-2563.

Three Keokuk men charged with animal torture

Three Keokuk men were charged July 6, with animal torture after a video appeared online in early May showing the men with an injured opossum.

Jerry McGee, 19, Austin Salyers, 18, and Casey Taylor, 19, allegedly found the opossum after it had been hit by a vehicle. The men were allegedly seen in the video throwing and beating the opossum while it was still alive. The video generated numerous complaints to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Lee County Attorney's Office and the Keokuk Police Department.

The individuals are scheduled to appear in Lee County court on July 26. Animal torture is an aggravated misdemeanor.

Media Contact: Ben Schlader, State Conservation Officer, Law Enforcement Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 319-470-0788.

Volunteers muscle 28 tons of trash from the Upper Cedar River

CEDAR RIVER – The upper stretch of the Cedar River in north-central Iowa is now 28 tons of trash lighter, thanks to the efforts of 469 volunteers.

This July, 469 volunteers took part in the 15th annual Project AWARE, paddling 55 miles of the Cedar River through Mitchell and Floyd counties from the Iowa-Minnesota state line to Howard's Woods Rec Area near Nashua.

Project AWARE, which stands for A Watershed Awareness River Expedition, is the Iowa DNR's volunteer river cleanup event which involves hundreds of people who spend anywhere from one to five days exploring Iowa's rivers and picking up trash.

"Project AWARE was such an awesome experience and we were truly thankful to be part of it," said Adam Shirley, Mitchell County Conservation Board Director. "It was impressive to watch the volunteers at work and we appreciate all of their hard work to improve the Cedar River."

Scrap metal was the heaviest item removed. Mitchell County Conservation and Floyd County Conservation handled the 15 tons of scrap metal removed during the event. Volunteers also removed 368 tires. This year, 88 percent of the trash pulled from the river was able to be recycled.

A total of 169 volunteers participated all five days of the event, but with some participating single days, there were about 250 volunteers on the water each day, ranging in age from 2 to 77. About 15 percent of this year's participants at the family-friendly event were under the age of 18. In addition to Iowa, volunteers hailed from 14 other states. Fifty-one of the volunteers were from Mitchell or Floyd counties.

"Project AWARE provided me with the motivation to visit the upper Cedar River and all the quaint towns that surround it. I never thought it possible that the Cedar River could be that beautiful! It's a gem of a river," said Jodi Gerot, a third-year volunteer from West Branch.

"I didn't know anything about Mitchell or Floyd counties and really enjoyed the scenery and the towns. I would love to go back to this area to paddle. The river was gorgeous and well-cared for by the locals," said Rose Danaher, an eight-year volunteer from Amana.

Photos from the event can be found on the Project AWARE website at www.iowadnr.gov/aware.

Event sponsors included:

Platinum Paddle Sponsors: Alliant Energy Foundation · Bridgestone's Tires4ward Program · Bug Soother · City of Charles City · Firestone Complete Auto Care · Flint Hills Resources · Floyd County Conservation · IIHR - Hydroscience & Engineering at The University of Iowa

· Iowa DNR – IOWATER, Rivers Programs · Iowa Flood Center · Iowa Rivers Revival · ITC · Mitchell County Conservation Board · N-Compass · State Hygienic Laboratory at The University of Iowa · Zanfel Laboratories, Inc.

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Life Jacket Sponsors: Andrew & Maureen Johnson

For more information on this event, visit www.iowadnr.gov/aware.

MEDIA CONTACT: Lynette Seigley, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, (319) 351-9393 or Lynette.Seigley@dnr.iowa.gov

**Oct. 6-8 Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshop
now accepting registrations**

Registration is now open for the Oct. 6-8 Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshop at Dolliver Memorial State Park, near Otho.

While the focus of BOW is primarily for women, the workshop is an opportunity for anyone 18 years or older to learn outdoor skills.

Workshop courses include off-highway vehicle safety and awareness, small game hunting and mentored squirrel hunt, explore bowhunting, introduction to birding and optics, from field to freezer, basic fishing, Dutch oven cooking, kayaking, deer hunting, intro to archery, wild edibles, wilderness navigation – map and compass and more.

Kayte Dunfee, an avid outdoorswoman from Colorado, will share her journey from animal enthusiast to hunter and how hunting transformed her vision and process of building an outdoor-centric, sustainable lifestyle in a session titled Orange is My New Black.

The cost for the workshop is \$200 before Sept. 8, and \$230 beginning Sept. 9. The fee includes program materials, equipment, lodging and meals. Enrollment is limited to 100 participants. A limited number of scholarships are available that can reduce the fee by \$100.

“This workshop is an excellent opportunity to try activities under the guidance of our top-notch instructors,” said Rachel Ladd, with the Iowa Departments of Natural Resources. “Our workshop is popular because we keep our class sizes small and the setting at Dolliver is beautiful, particularly in the fall.”

Go to www.iowadnr.gov/bow to register, select classes and for more information on applying for a scholarship.

For more information, contact Rachel Ladd at 515-729-6037 or Rachel.Ladd@dnr.iowa.gov.

Look for expanded waterfowl zone and deer hunting options in 2017-18 Iowa hunting regulations

The 2017-18 Iowa Hunting, Trapping and Migratory Game Bird Regulations will be arriving at license vendors across the state in the next few weeks.

Hunters should note that there is only one regulations book this year instead of the traditional two.

Changes with the season setting calendar by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allowed the duck, goose and other migratory game bird hunting regulations to be included in with the seasons and regulations for other species. The waterfowl seasons, zones and bag limits now have their own section.

Hunters will also notice the general hunting seasons and limits and waterfowl seasons and limits tri-fold cards are no longer being printed. The cards and regulations are currently

available online to download or print at www.iowadnr.gov/hunting.

Notable hunting regulation changes include extending the Missouri River Zone for ducks and geese to include all the land and water west of Interstate 29; and allowing deer hunters participating in the youth, disabled hunter or either shotgun seasons the option of using straight walled ammunition allowed for pistol hunting in rifles.

However; not all straight walled cartridges are allowed.

The regulations book includes a list of allowable cartridges and a set of guides based on rimmed or rimless cartridges if the cartridge isn't listed.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has included the .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin and .45-70 Govt that was an allowable pistol cartridge prior to the law change. Cartridges not on the previous list or that fall outside the guidelines will not be allowed.