



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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Seven Ways Iowans Can "Take It Outside" this Holiday Season

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With Thanksgiving just around the corner, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is encouraging families to consider spending part of their holiday enjoying Iowa's outdoors.

"Pick an activity based on weather conditions and your family's interests, and consider visiting one of Iowa's state parks, forests or recreations areas for a dose of nature to help you relax and exercise," said Todd Coffelt, chief of the Iowa DNR's State Parks Bureau.

Here are a few of Iowa's best fall and winter outdoor activities:

Take a hike. Walk for miles in Iowa's state parks, trail systems and nature areas.

Bundle up and enjoy viewing wildlife, the solitude of the "off season," or introduce an out-of-state relative to a bit of Iowa beauty.

Go hunting. Many families enjoy spending Thanksgiving in the field hunting together. Consider bringing a novice along, perhaps a neighbor or cousin who has never been hunting before.

Enjoy a scenic drive. Load up the car and visit a state or county park. With dozens of parks to choose from, late fall and winter provides unique viewing and scenic beauty.

Reserve a spot. Consider spending part of the holiday in one of the state park's cabins or camping spots. State parks are open for camping year-round; however, facilities are limited to pit latrines and water is available only through frost-free hydrants. Electricity is available. To prepare in advance, make a reservation on the [DNR's reservation page](#), and check out the DNR state park [alerts and closures page](#) for specific winterizing plans for each state park.

Pedal a trail. Cool-weather biking can be an invigorating way to explore Iowa's immense trail system. Or consider the newest trend in biking and conquer winter on a fat-tire bike.

Cast a line. Fall and winter provides a picturesque setting to catch trout with less competition and no bugs. While Backbone State Park is Iowa's only state park with a trout stream, there are streams near Pikes Peak State Park, Yellow River State Forest and Volga River State Recreation Area. Or take advantage of Iowa's many urban trout stockings, where local ponds and lake have been stocked with rainbow trout for a new opportunity that's easily accessible for all age groups and abilities. Check out the DNR's [trout fishing page](#) for details and stocking information.

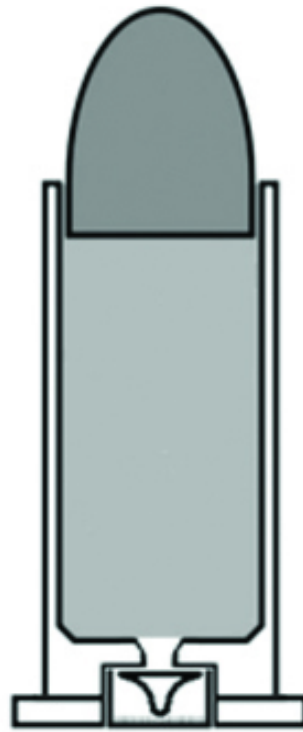
Grab those skinny skis. Some people are actually crossing their fingers for an early snowfall so they can get out their cross-country skis and head down the trail. Check out one of Iowa's state parks and forests that have groomed trails for cross-country skiing. Take it outside this holiday season.

For more information about state parks and ideas for outdoor activities, go to www.iowadnr.gov

New law allows approved pistol cartridges for use in rifles to hunt deer



**RIMLESS
CARTRIDGE**



**RIMMED
CARTRIDGE**

New law allows approved pistol cartridges for use in rifles to hunt deer. Only rifles shooting straight wall ammunition .357 caliber or larger with an expanding-type bullet is allowed.

Iowa hunters will have a new option this fall while hunting deer during the **youth** season, **disabled** hunter season and **both shotgun** seasons – rifles that are capable of shooting straight walled cartridges.

The law was enacted to allow for a lower recoil option for older and younger hunters, but is available to all hunters in those four seasons.

The law allows for straight wall ammunition that was previously approved for pistol hunting to be used in rifles. The list of acceptable calibers is in the Iowa Hunting and Trapping Regulations (p. 31, www.iowadnr.gov/hunting) along with criteria for similar sized ammunition not on the list.

The new law requires individuals caught with a rifle capable of shooting ammunition not on the approved list while hunting deer to have their hunting privileges suspended for two years and receive a \$250 fine.

Common Questions:

Is this a new season?

No, it is simply an option for the method of take during the existing youth, disabled hunter and both shotgun seasons.

Do I need any special license to use my rifle?

No special license is needed but a hunter must have the required Iowa hunting license, habitat fee and deer tag.

What is allowed?

The following cartridges may now be used in rifles for the purpose of hunting deer in Iowa.

Center-fired straight-walled **rimless** cartridges chambered for handgun use with bullets from 0.357" to .500" diameter and a case length from **0.850" to 1.800"**

Center-fired straight-walled **rimmed** cartridges chambered for handgun use with bullets from 0.357" to 0.500" diameter with a case length from **1.285" to 1.800"**

- 1.800" is currently the longest case for a mainstream cartridge designed specifically for handguns and registered with Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacture's Institute (SAAMI)
- Criteria includes .450 Bushmaster and .45 Raptor

Why are some calibers outside of the approved size allowed but others are not?

The .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, and .45-70 Govt. have been an option for hunters using handguns. Since they were allowed prior to 2017, those calibers were grandfathered in.

What defines a straight-walled cartridge?

The entire length of the case is the same diameter as the bullet.

Where/when can it be used?

Straight-walled cartridges may be used in rifles statewide during the **youth, disabled and both shotgun seasons**

Will the law be in effect for the 2017 deer hunting seasons?

Yes, it will be an option as a legal method of take.

Is this new?

The bullet caliber size has been allowed for handguns to hunt deer since 1997. What has changed is the type of gun allowed to fire the bullet has been expanded to include rifles.

Can I use this for turkey too or only deer?

No, this is only allowed to hunt deer.

Are all rifles legal?

No, not all rifles are legal. Only rifles shooting straight wall ammunition **.357 caliber or larger** with an expanding-type bullet is allowed. The following center-fire cartridges may be used, along with others not identified in this list, that meet the straight-walled cartridge criteria:

.357 Magnum

.357 Maximum

.375 Winchester
.38 Super
.40 S&W
.401 Powermag
10 mm Auto
.41 Remington Magnum
.41 Action Express
.44 S&W Special
.44 Remington Magnum
.44 Automag
.444 Marlin
.445 Super Mag
.45 ACP
.45 Colt
.45 Super Mag
.45 Winchester Magnum
.45 Silhouette
.450 Bushmaster
.451 Detonics
.454 Casull
.45-70 Govt.
.460 Rowland
.460 S&W Mag
.475 Widley Magnum
.475 Linebaugh
.480 Ruger
.50 Action Express
.50 Linebaugh
.50 Beowulf
.500 S&W Mag

What is an expanding type bullet?

Expanding bullets, also known as hollow-point bullets, are designed to expand or mushroom upon impact versus regular bullets, or full metal jacket ammunition. Regular bullets, especially those that travel at a very high speed, tend to go through targets with minimal impact.

Can I use a rifle during the late muzzleloader season?

No, only the shotgun seasons, the youth season and disabled hunter season.

Is there a magazine restriction?

No, not this year, but hunters should watch for possible changes to this requirement in upcoming years.

My rifle does not meet the requirements, can I get a waiver?

No, there are no waivers available. Additionally, the new law includes stronger penalties for individuals caught with a rifle capable of shooting ammunition **not** on the approved list while hunting deer. These include having their hunting privileges suspended for two years and a \$250 fine.

Fall trout spawn in full swing

Hundreds of yellow ovals offset the brown and green coloration of each female brown trout ready to spawn at the Manchester Fish Hatchery. The splashes of color are signs that trout spawning season is in full swing.

Brook trout, Iowa's only native trout, already gave up their eggs in October. A domesticated strain of brook trout is maintained at the Manchester Fish Hatchery. Over 534,000 eggs were collected this year.

Brown trout are currently being spawned. Brood trout are brought to the hatchery from French Creek in Allamakee County. They are held at the hatchery across two spawning cycles then released back in French Creek, supplementing earlier generations of brown trout.

All brown trout are stocked as 2-inch fingerlings. "Anglers like these 'wild' stream raised fish. They are harder to catch than our put-and-take stocked fish," explains Mike Steuck, Iowa DNR fisheries supervisor for interior streams. "Many of the public streams have lots of brown trout in them."

Rainbow trout, the backbone of Iowa's trout program, take up much of December and January. Roughly one million eggs will be collected this season.

Once a week, crews check for ripe female brood stock. After a quick sedative bath to quiet them, each big trout is held firmly over a plastic bowl, as one of the workers rolls a hand down her belly to force out a stream of orange-golden eggs—up to 4,000 to 6,000 per fish. Mixed in quickly is the milk-white sperm from two males. Water is added to activate the eggs and

sperm allowing fertilization to occur. The ingredients are gently stirred with a turkey feather to avoid bruising the eggs.

The fertilized eggs are poured into an incubator tray and slid into their place below a stream of 50 to 52 degree water until they hatch. About 30 days after fertilization, tiny sac-fry hatch. Dark clouds of tiny fish grow in raceways at the hatchery. The fish are “trained” by automatic feeders to eat.

As the trout develop and grow, they are monitored and transferred to larger tanks, then raceways. The fingerlings will be kept at Manchester or transferred to Iowa’s two other stations, near Elkader and Decorah, to be raised for future stocking. In 12 to 14 months, they will be a half-pound and ready to be stocked. Nearly 50 put-and-take streams throughout nine northeast Iowa counties and almost 20 urban locations are stocked through the cold weather months.

“We stock about 380,000 catchable rainbow and brook trout from the hatcheries,” said Steuck. “We also stock approximately 200,000 brown and rainbow trout fingerlings annually to grow in the streams.”

There’s natural spawning, mostly brown trout and some brook trout, in more than 40 northeast Iowa streams. Most trout caught, though, are spawned under the eyes of hatchery workers at Manchester. These coldwater fish are great fighters and beautiful in their spawning colors this time of year.

Find more information about Iowa trout streams and tips for trout fishing on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/trout.

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, regional fisheries supervisor, northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

Kellerton Grasslands named globally important bird area

In August, Ringgold County’s Kellerton Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA) was elevated to status of a Globally Important Bird Area (GIBA) by BirdLife International, based in Great Britain, and the National Audubon Society.

“The Kellerton Grasslands are well-known in Iowa for the resident population of greater prairie chickens, but the new GIBA designation was made based upon the region’s critical importance to nesting Henslow’s sparrows, listed as an Iowa threatened species,” said Doug Harr, president of Iowa Audubon.

While Audubon’s IBA program recognizes sites critical for nesting by several declining bird species or important for large migration stopovers, the BCA program is aimed at designating

large landscapes of habitat critical to a wider variety of Iowa's birds and other wildlife.

Kellerton GIBA also has dual designation as an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Bird Conservation Area (BCA). Kellerton was DNR's original Iowa BCA, and the first such designation of a grassland in the nation.

Although the prairie chicken was one of the DNR's first targets for better habitat protection on a BCA landscape, it was quickly realized that the area provides habitat for pretty much every other Iowa grassland nesting bird species, including nesting species of greatest conservation need like Henslow's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead shrike, Bell's vireo, northern harrier and upland sandpiper.

Nesting population studies of some species were begun through Iowa State University, with original Henslow's sparrow numbers compiled by Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit leader Rolf Koford. Following Koford's retirement, DNR wildlife diversity biologist Bruce Ehresman took over collecting more nesting data, with up to 309 Henslow's sparrow territories documented in 2015 and 331 territories confirmed in 2016. In early 2017, Ehresman submitted sufficient records to the National Audubon Society so it could be considered for and receive globally important status.

GIBA designation is not easy to acquire, but large numbers of Henslow's sparrows nesting in the Kellerton Grasslands resulted in this BCA/GIBA gaining only the second such international recognition in Iowa. The first was Effigy Mounds/Yellow River Forest BCA/GIBA, designated in 2013 for its nesting population of cerulean warblers, a species seeing a 70 percent national decline since 1966. Upon receiving globally important status, the Iowa DNR and Iowa Audubon will continue to collaborate; targeting even more conservation efforts to assure that these icon species can stabilize and continue to recover, while also providing far better habitat for all wildlife.

Kellerton Grasslands BCA/GIBA offers some of the best grassland bird viewing opportunities in all of Iowa.

Media Contact: Bruce Ehresman, Wildlife Diversity Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823.

DNR responds to hunting incident in Jackson County

BERNARD, Iowa -- State conservation officers with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources responded to a hunting-related injury that occurred in Jackson County at the Three Hills Hunting Preserve, during a pheasant hunt on Sunday shortly after 11 a.m.

An 11-year-old Dubuque boy was pheasant hunting with his father at the preserve when he shot at a pheasant and his firearm exploded. The gun was out of battery with the action

slightly open when he discharged the firearm, causing fragments of the shell to escape out the side of the gun striking his thumb and breaking the tip. Upon further investigation, it was determined the shotgun's action was not locking in place, causing it to open during the shot.

He was transported to Mercy Medical Center in Dubuque where he was treated for his injury.

Media Contact: Andrew Keil, DNR Conservation Officer, (563) 590-1945, Andrew.Keil@dnr.iowa.gov.

Iowa deer harvest similar to 2016

The 2017 Iowa deer harvest is running slightly behind the 2016 totals. So far this fall, 21,825 deer have been reported, compared to 21,947 for the same period last year.

The bulk of Iowa's deer harvest occurs during the two shotgun seasons in December.