



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 23, 2018

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## Effort underway to sample for fatal deer disease in Allamakee, Clayton counties

Deer hunters participating in the first weekend of the nine day scientific collection effort in the surveillance zones in Allamakee and Clayton counties provided 54 tissue samples to state officials that will be tested for the presence of chronic wasting disease.

Chronic wasting disease is a neurologic disease of deer, moose and elk, belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. Though it shares certain features with other TSEs like bovine spongiform encephalopathy (“Mad Cow Disease”) or scrapie in sheep, it is a distinct disease apparently affecting only deer, moose and elk. It is always fatal.

The disease first appeared in Iowa’s wild deer herd in 2013 and each year since, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has placed extra emphasis on tracking the movement of the disease with the cooperation of successful hunters.

The scientific collection effort was outcome of meetings in Harpers Ferry and Elkader on Jan. 18 that drew more than 125 attendees.

Terry Haindfield, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR, who is coordinating the effort to contain and limit the spread of the fatal deer disease, led those meetings.

“Our hope with this effort is to collect samples from specific sections in these zones where we don’t have much data, from adult animals which are those more likely to have picked the disease, and if we can, to remove additional positive deer that will no longer be spreading this disease on the environment for others to become infected,” Haindfield said.

“We are doing everything we can to try to contain or slow the spread of this disease until science can catch up and give us some tools to fight it. We can’t do this alone and are grateful for the cooperation for the hunters and landowners,” he said. “We want the tradition of hunting to continue.”

The collection effort ends Jan. 28.

Permits to participate in the collection effort are available at the DNR office in Harpers Ferry or the Clayton County Conservation Osborne Nature Center, which will serve as the designated check stations. Permits will be available at the check stations daily during the Jan. 20-28 collecting period, starting at 8 a.m. on weekends and noon on the weekdays.

### **Scientific collection effort weekend results**

#### Allamakee County Surveillance Zone

- 41 deer collected: 34 sampled, 7 fawns not sampled
- 264 collectors operating under 64 permits
- Goal: 300 samples, not more than 75 from Yellow River State Forest

#### Clayton County Surveillance Zone

- 26 deer collected: 20 sampled, 6 fawns not sampled
- 198 collectors operating under 50 permits
- Goal: 300 samples

The collection effort ends Jan. 28.

### **Deer tissue test kits available, results coming in**

Iowa has two deer confirmed positive for chronic wasting disease from the 2017 season – one each from the Allamakee and Clayton County surveillance zones – and five suspected positives.

The five suspected positive are all in the Allamakee County surveillance zone and are going through a second confirmation test.

Labs at Colorado State University and Iowa State University continue to process tissue samples and report the results to the Iowa DNR.

**Media Contact:** Terry Haindfield, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-546-7960.

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## Missouri and Big Sioux rivers paddlefish fishing season opens Feb. 4

The paddlefish fishing season is open from sunrise to sunset from Feb. 4 to April 30 on the Missouri and Big Sioux rivers. Anglers fishing for paddlefish must have a valid Iowa fishing license, along with a special paddlefish license and unused transportation tag(s).

Please keep track of your catch and effort and return the survey card after the paddlefish season whether you harvested a fish or not. The information collected will help the Iowa DNR evaluate the success of the season and determine what potential changes/modifications may be needed. Recent changes to the season were mostly guided by your comments and are much appreciated.

If you catch a jaw-tagged fish (numbered band in the lower jaw), call the phone number on the tag and report the tag number, date of capture, capture location and eye-to-fork length. The Iowa DNR and other state fisheries agencies tag paddlefish to better understand and manage populations. Tagging provides valuable information to estimate population size, fish movement and growth.

For more information about Iowa's special paddlefish season, visit the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/paddlefish](http://www.iowadnr.gov/paddlefish).

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## Soap Creek and Stephens State Forest to become a Bird Conservation Area

OTTUMWA— A public ceremony to dedicate Soap Creek and Eldon Wildlife Areas, Stephens State Forest Unionville Unit, Lake Wapello State Park and a portion of the Soap Creek watershed as Iowa's newest Bird Conservation Area (BCA) will take place on Feb. 8 at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the Pioneer Ridge Nature Center; located about six miles south of Ottumwa on the east side of Hwy. 63 at the Wapello County Conservation Board headquarters.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting the dedication that will include brief presentations and the unveiling of a special Bird Conservation Area sign.

This unique area is one of southeastern Iowa's most species-rich grassland/savanna/forest habitats.

"Designating this complex as a Bird Conservation Area will add to its recognition by indicating its importance for nesting and migratory grassland, savanna, and forest birds," said Bruce

Ehresman, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program. "It provides important nesting habitat for declining grassland birds, such as meadowlarks, state threatened Henslow's sparrows and northern bobwhites, for declining savanna birds like red-headed woodpeckers and state endangered barn owls, and for declining forest birds like Kentucky warblers, wood thrushes and Acadian flycatchers; plus this BCA provides migration stopover habitat for a large number of other bird species suffering nationwide declines."

This area also is rich in cultural history, including thousands of years when it was inhabited by Native Americans and the time-period when Euro-American settlers first arrived and benefitted from the Native people who already were present.

This new BCA will likely attract bird enthusiasts from throughout the region and beyond, Ehresman said. "Watching wildlife is a \$350 million industry in Iowa, and more birders visiting this area will support the growing local tourism economy and encourage investment in local bird conservation," he said.

"The designation of the Soap Creek-Stephens Forest Bird Conservation Area serves to recognize the excellent teamwork of many partners, cooperating to emphasize the importance of habitat for birds and other wildlife. State, federal, and county conservation agencies, working together with private conservation organizations and citizens have made this possible," said Jeff Glaw, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR managing the Sugema Wildlife Unit.

**For more information**, contact Bruce Ehresman, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-432-2823 or Jeff Glaw, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 319-293-7185.

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## DNR to hold listening session on fall hunting and trapping regulations Feb. 21

Des Moines - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is hosting public meetings on February 21 from 6 to 9 p.m., to listen to the public's thoughts on the hunting and trapping regulations for this fall.

These meetings are part of the process for making rules in state government.

"Any rule changes must be discussed with Iowa's citizens who might be impacted by the changes before the rule changes are proposed. The process helps ensure that rule changes serve the public's wishes and do not impact Iowa's economy," said Todd Bishop, chief of the wildlife bureau.

At each meeting DNR staff will facilitate a discussion about what went well last fall, what didn't, and what changes hunters and trappers would like to see for this fall.

These discussions along with the data that the wildlife bureau collects on harvest and population numbers will be used to develop recommendations for any rule changes. Any

changes must be approved by the Natural Resource Commission and then go back to the public for further comment before taking effect next fall.

Meetings will be held in Atlantic, Boone, Burlington, Calmar, Chariton, Council Bluffs, Creston, DeWitt, Knoxville, Lake View, Ottumwa, Peosta, Sheldon, Solon, Spencer, Tripoli and Ventura.

Any person attending the public meeting 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](mailto:Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov), and advise of specific needs.

### **Feb. 21 wildlife listening session locations**

- Atlantic, Iowa DNR office, 1401 Sunnyside Lane
- Boone, Iowa DNR research station, 1436 255th Street
- Burlington, Public Library, 210 Court St.
- Calmar, Northeast Iowa Community College Dairy Education Center, 1527 Hwy. 150 South, Site #1793 in Room 114
- Chariton, Iowa DNR research station, Red Hawk State Park, 24570 Hwy. 34 (White building at the Red Hawk Lake Dam)
- Council Bluffs, Fish and Game Club, 531 Comanche Street
- Creston, Southwestern Community College, 1501 West Townline, Room 180
- DeWitt, Central High School, Room 311 (near the auditorium)
- Knoxville, Red Rock Army Corps of Engineers headquarters, 1105 N Hwy. T15
- Lake View, Iowa DNR wildlife office, 116 South State Road
- Ottumwa, Ottumwa High School, 501 Second St E, Room 157
- Peosta, Northeast Iowa Community College, 8342 NICC Drive, Room 203
- Sheldon, Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 W Park Street, Building H, Room 519
- Solon, Solon Middle School Media Center, 1775 Racine, Solon IA
- Spencer, Iowa Lakes Community College - Spencer Campus, 1900 Grand Ave., Room 108B
- Tripoli, Tripoli High School, 209 Eighth Ave SW, ICN Room
- Ventura, Iowa DNR wildlife office, 15326 Balsam Ave.

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## **Officials hope tax check-off that benefits conservatoin continues upward trend on 2017 tax returns**

Last year, more than 7,800 of Iowa's 1.6 million taxpayers helped boost wildlife conservation with donations to the Fish and Wildlife Fund on their state income tax form – an increase of

nearly 300 contributors over 2016.

“We are appreciative for the increase in contributors, and are hopeful that more Iowans see the benefit that their donations goes directly to habitat development and restoration programs for some of Iowa’s most vulnerable animal species,” said Stephanie Shepherd, wildlife biologist for the Wildlife Diversity Program in the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Iowans donated roughly \$147,000 last spring when completing their 2016 tax forms, which translates to an average gift of \$18.73 per donor. While the rise in the number of contributors is welcome, it represents only 0.4% of total tax payers in Iowa.

The Fish and Wildlife Fund, known popularly as the “Chickadee Check-off,” is a mechanism the Iowa Legislature created in the 1980s for Iowa citizens to donate to wildlife conservation on the Iowa state tax form. Prior to its establishment, the so called non-game wildlife had no dedicated funding.

At its height, Iowans donated more than \$200,000 annually to the fund. While the main reasons for the decline in donations are unknown, Shepherd said tax payers need to be alert when filling out their form or working with a tax preparer.

“The chickadee check-off is an inconspicuous line that is easy to pass over or forget, and many tax preparers may not remember to ask whether a client wants to donate,” she said. “It may be up to the taxpayer to remind their preparer, or make a point of looking for it whether they are doing their form on paper or electronically.”

According to Shepherd, donating on the tax form is easy: simply write the amount to donate next to the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off, line 57 on Form 1040, and the sum is either automatically deducted from the refund or added to the amount owed. As with all charitable contributions, the amount is deductible from next year’s taxes.

“Currently only about half a percent of Iowans donate,” said Shepherd. “If every Iowa taxpayer donated just \$1, it would mean \$1.5 million for wildlife and natural resource conservation.”

Proceeds from the check-off are one of the few means of support for the Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Diversity Program, responsible for protecting more than 1,000 fish and wildlife species in the state. Money from the check-off helps improve wildlife habitat, restore native wildlife, provide opportunities for citizens to learn about our natural resources and much more.

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**April 27-29 Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop now accepting registrations**

Registration is now open for the April 27-29 Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshop at Honey Creek Resort on Lake Rathbun.

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

“This workshop is all about introducing new participants to the outdoors and building social support networks so skills learned can be applied to other outdoor opportunities throughout the year,” said Rachel Ladd, with the Iowa Departments of Natural Resources.

Workshop courses include off-highway vehicle safety and awareness, shotgun shooting, turkey hunting and mentored turkey hunt, explore bowfishing, canning and preserving, firearm cleaning, pan fishing, Dutch oven cooking, kayaking, foraged flavors, meat smoking and more.

The cost of the workshop is \$215 (double occupancy) before March 23, and \$200 (no lodging) beginning March 23. The fee includes program materials, equipment, lodging and meals. Enrollment is limited to 120 participants. A limited number of scholarships are available that can reduce the fee by \$130.

“This workshop is an excellent opportunity to try activities under the guidance of our top-notch instructors,” Ladd said. “Our workshop is popular because we keep our class sizes small and the setting at Honey Creek Resort is beautiful, particularly in the spring.”

Participants will experience an improved registration process that will build their workshop schedule as they make their selections. “Make sure to choose one class for each session, each class will show the number of seats still available and once a class has filled, it will be closed. Attendees will know what sessions they are in at the completion of the registration process,” Ladd said.

Part of the registration process includes the options for lodging. Based on participant feedback, options now include both hotel rooms and cabins.

Early registration is encouraged as enrollment is limited and workshop spaces and lodging fill quickly. Go to [www.iowadnr.gov/bow](http://www.iowadnr.gov/bow) to download a registration form, 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](mailto:Rachel.Ladd@dnr.iowa.gov).