



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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Public meeting on fatal deer disease set for March 15 in Corydon

CORYDON, Iowa - Deer hunters who hunt in Wayne County take note— chronic wasting disease (CWD) has shown up in your area.

A hunter harvested wild deer taken during the first shotgun season in southeast Wayne County has tested positive for CWD. This is the first hunter harvested wild deer outside of northeast Iowa to test positive for the always fatal disease.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has scheduled a meeting on March 15, at 6:30 p.m., in the 4H Banquet Hall at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, 800 Second Ave., in Corydon, to discuss the status of CWD in Iowa and how deer hunters can help stop or slow the spread of CWD.

Terry Haindfield, wildlife biologist for the Iowa DNR who is leading the effort to combat CWD, 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," Haindfield 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 69,000 deer tissue samples for CWD since monitoring began in 2002. The disease first appeared in Iowa’s wild deer herd in 2013. So far, there have been 28 positive tests: 25 in Allamakee County, 2 in Clayton County and 1 in Wayne County.

The Iowa DNR sets an annual goal of collecting 4,500 deer tissue samples. The effort has focused on portions of northeast and eastern Iowa near Wisconsin, Illinois, and south-central Iowa near Missouri, where CWD 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 taken annually to check for CWD. The disease has been found in every state around Iowa.

CWD is a neurological disease belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) 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 CWD and other infectious disease online at www.iowadnr.gov/cwd.

Media Contact: Terry Haindfield, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-546-7960 or 563-380-3422.

Spring urban trout stocking starts March 23

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources fisheries staff will release between 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout in 10 lakes across Iowa in March and April as part of its cool weather trout program.

The spring urban trout stockings are a great place to take kids to catch their first fish. A small hook with a nightcrawler or corn under a small bobber to casting small simple spinners such as a panther martin or mepps is all you need to get in on the fun.

Bringing trout to cities and towns offers a “close to home” option for Iowans who might not travel to northeast Iowa to experience trout fishing. Most locations also host a family friendly event to help anglers have success and fun while fishing.

The popular program is supported by the sales of the trout fee. Anglers need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can buy a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit.

Once you buy your trout fee, you can fish for trout all year long at any of the urban lakes and trout streams in northeast Iowa. Find more information about Iowa trout streams on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/trout.

2018 Spring Urban Trout Stocking Schedule

March 23

10:00 am: Discovery Park, Muscatine

10:30 am: Lake of the Hills, Davenport

Noon: Wilson Lake, east of Donnellson

March 24

11:00 am: Ottumwa Park Pond, Ottumwa

11:00 am: Terry Trueblood Lake, Iowa City

March 31

10:00 am: Prairie Park (Cedar Bend), Cedar Rapids

April 7

11:00 am: Banner Lake South, north of Indianola

April 14

10:00 am: Heritage Pond, Dubuque

11:00 am: North Prairie Lake, Cedar Falls

April 21

11:00 am: Sand Lake, Marshalltown

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

Grants help provide fishing opportunities in Hispanic communities

Three Iowa organizations were awarded a George H.W. Bush Vamos A Pescar™ Education grant to provide hands-on fishing programs and classes for Hispanic families in their communities.

Organizations receiving the grant are the Iowa Latino Community Center, Inc. (Latino Center of Iowa), Tama County Conservation and Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Dallas County.

The grant is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Fish Iowa! angler education program and the Recreational Fishing and Boating Foundation's (RBFF) Vamos A Pescar program.

Each grantee is working with local partners to better reach Hispanic community members with information and to plan family-focused events during the summer. If you would like to learn more, you can reach out to grant recipients, or contact the Fish Iowa! program.

Media Contact: Barb Gigar, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-494-3891.

Time to Stop Pruning Oaks

It may still be cold outside, but it's time to stop pruning oak trees to prevent the spread of oak wilt.

"The best way to prevent the spread of oak wilt is to not prune any oak tree between the end of March and the start of October," said Tivon Feeley, coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) forest health program.

However, Feeley said the warm weather conditions indicate that spring might be a bit early this year and for that reason, he suggests finishing oak pruning by this weekend.

Oak wilt is caused by a fungus and has been present in Iowa for many years. It mostly impacts red, black and pin oaks, but can infect white and bur oaks. If black, pin, or red oaks are infected by the fungus, they usually die within the same summer. White oak and bur oak can often take years before they succumb.

"A healthy tree can be infected by the fungus through open wounds during the growing season that is carried from a diseased tree to a healthy tree by a small beetle," Feeley said. "The second form of infection is through root grafts between oak trees of the same

species. For example, if a red oak is infected and there is another red oak within 50 to 100 feet, there is a good chance that the roots of these trees are grafted and the fungus can move from the diseased tree to the healthy tree.”

Symptoms of infected trees usually include leaves turning a bronzed brown along the outer margins of the leaves. These leaves can often still have some green on them as they fall from the tree. The defoliation tends to start at the top of the tree. The best way to prevent the spread of oak wilt is to prevent any wounding to oak trees during the growing season.

“If a tree is wounded from storm damage or pruning is required during the growing season, treat the wounds immediately with a wound dressing such as acrylic paint,” Feeley said. “Do not purchase pruning paints/sealants. Those products slow the tree’s ability to seal over the wound.”

More information on oak wilt prevention and control can be found at http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/howtos/ht_oakwilt/identify_prevent_and_control_oak_wilt_print.pdf

Media Contact: Tivon Feeley, Forest Program Health Leader, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-725-8453.

Melting ice reveals winter fish kills in three eastern Iowa lakes

SOLON - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received a report of dead fish in Terry Trueblood Lake in Iowa City, and Mohawk Park Lake and Cedar Lake in Cedar Rapids, on Feb. 27.

DNR fisheries staff found about 1,000 dead bluegill, 1,500 channel catfish, 225 carp, 100 largemouth bass, 400 trout, 150 wipers (hybrid striped bass) and several thousand gizzard shad on March 1 at Terry Trueblood Lake. Almost all of the dead fish at Cedar Lake and Mohawk Park Lake were gizzard shad.

Winter kills happen when a combination of ice and snow blocks sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, which in turn, stop producing oxygen. The longer the snow and ice cover lasts, the less oxygen is in the water.

Winter fish kills are common on Iowa shallow lakes during long winters with lots of snow cover. “Terry Trueblood Lake, Cedar Lake and Mohawk Park Lake are very shallow to start with and dry fall conditions have caused lower lake levels,” said Paul Sleeper, DNR

fisheries management biologist. “Our larger eastern Iowa lakes are not experiencing winter fish kills.”

Signs of winter kills are visible shortly after ice out when fish that died during the winter float and are blown to shore. In certain lakes, like Rathbun, Black Hawk, Storm and Coralville, these dead fish are often a source of food for channel catfish that will go on a feeding spree. Many anglers see this as an early season fishing opportunity for trophy-sized channel catfish.

Fisheries staff are watching lakes and ponds with low oxygen levels that are at risk of having a winter fish kill. Many Iowa lakes and ponds are still under ice, so additional smaller, shallow ponds and lakes might have winter kills after the ice disappears.

Media Contact: Paul Sleeper, Fisheries Management Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 319-350-8399.

Boater education is goal of national effort March 18-24

A national campaign is encouraging boaters to Spring Aboard by enrolling in a boater education course before the kickoff to the boating season.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) works with BoaterExam and Boat-Ed to offer online boater education courses and during Spring Aboard campaign week March 18-24, these companies will be offering 50 percent off the price of their on-line course.

Use the code SpringAboard2018 to receive the discount.

“March is the perfect time to take a course. The summer boating season will be here before we know it and all of us could benefit from a refresher course,” said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator for the Iowa DNR.

The exam covers required equipment, boating basics, navigation rules, environmental stressors, aids to navigation and takes about six hours to complete. Once a student has passed the test, they can print off their course completion certificate.

An estimated 220,000 boats are registered in Iowa. Last year, there were 42 boating incidents reported on Iowa waters.

Media Contact: Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator and Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-725-8477.