



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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New Cabin at Yellow River State Forest for Overnight Guests



Cabin at Yellow River State Forest. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Iowa state parks has a new cabin available for rent at Yellow River State Forest in Harper's Ferry.

The one-bedroom camping cabin sleeps six people and has two porches, including one that is screened-in. Amenities include a refrigerator, microwave, heating/air conditioning, and a wood fireplace. Camping cabins do not have running water so there is not a bathroom or shower; however, a hydrant outside the cabin provides drinking water. The cabin is located near the park office and is available to rent for two-night minimum stays for \$35/night plus taxes. The rental season is April 15 - October 31 and the cabin can be reserved 12 months in advance.

Yellow River Forest in northeast Iowa has 8,500 acres and is a destination for trout fishing, hiking, hunting and more. The park features more than 25 miles of trails perfect for backpackers and equestrians.

Iowa state parks offer more than 90 cabins in 20 state parks and forests, ranging from yurts to modern family cabins that sleep up to 14. Reservations can be made at iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com or by calling 1-877-427-2757.

Join the search for Iowa's endangered bumble bee



Photograph by Jim Durbin

Photo courtesy of Jim Durbin

The rusty patched bumble bee was designated as endangered by the federal government in 2017, after determining that the population had declined 87 percent in the last 20 years and is only present on 0.1 percent of its historic range.

Named after the rusty patch centrally located on the backs of workers and males, but not queens, it once occupied grasslands and tallgrass prairies in the Upper Midwest and Northeast.

In Iowa they can be found mainly in the northeast corner, concentrated in Black Hawk, Clayton, Johnson, Allamakee, Jackson and Winneshiek counties. However, rusty patched bumble bees have recently been confirmed six new locations in Iowa in the last two weeks, including in Boone County in an urban prairie garden, prompting wildlife experts to ask gardeners in central Iowa to look for this unique species.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is in the process of conducting a survey to identify locations where rusty patched bumble bees are found that will be included as part of a larger national population survey.

Rusty patched and other bumble bee species provide essential ecological services for their respective ecosystems, especially for native flora, including wildflowers and plants that produce fruits and seeds that other wildlife depend on. They are also critical for the

pollination of some of our favorite crops including blueberries, cranberries, and tomatoes. In fact, bumble bees are more effective pollinators than honey bees because of their ability to “buzz pollinate,” where the bees contract their indirect flight muscles to produce strong vibrations that forcibly expel the pollen from inside the flower.

What you can do to help

Plant a pollinator garden.

Use native bee friendly plants that flower in various times of the year so the bees always have a food source. Wildflowers that are particularly good for rusty patched bumble bees include purple prairie clover, wild bergamot or bee balm, wild indigo, joe-pye-weed and goldenrod. For a more complete list read the [Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Midwest Plant Guide](#). [Avoid invasive and non-native plants and remove any invasive plants you find in your yard.](#)

Offer a nesting location option.

Rusty patched bumble bees in particular like to nest in the ground so providing nesting habitat is also important. Examples of nesting habitat would be unmowed or brushy areas and natural areas where there is undisturbed soil.

Minimize use of pesticides.

Remember pesticides can be lethal to bees so limit their use and avoid them entirely when you can.

Have you seen a bee? Do you want to know its species? Take a picture and visit bumblebeewatch.org.

If you've found a Rusty Patched Bumble Bee please contact the Iowa DNR at 515-725-8464 or seth.moore@dnr.iowa.gov.

Late summer underwater aquatic plant control for ponds

A healthy pond needs aquatic plants, but too many can upset a fishing pond's balance and become a nuisance. Many pond owners struggle with how to control the amount of aquatic plants, without completely removing all of them, so they can enjoy their pond.

Pond owners can use herbicides to kill underwater plants, but their growing season is almost over.

Pond rakes or cutters, although more labor intensive, are perfect this time of year to control aquatic plants in small areas to create fishing lanes, swimming areas and dock access.

Pond rakes tear plants from the bottom and let you remove them from near shore or around docks. Attach a float to the rake to let it skim and remove plants and moss or algae from the surface.

Cutters sink to the bottom and cut the plant stems as it is dragged back, making the plants float to the top. The pond plants are often carried away by the wind or you can pick them up with a floating rake.

Use a long-handled rake or cutter with a long reach that you can throw and pull back. You can use these handy tools for many years, and they cost less than a gallon of some aquatic herbicides. Local hardware or pool stores may carry these, or try an online search for “pond rake or cutter.”

A few tips to remember:

- Many plants spread by fragmentation, so if growth is not throughout the pond, do not use these methods.
- Once out of the water, let the plants dry out before moving them too far. This will greatly lighten your load.
- Obey State Law. Don't haul the plants off your property; you cannot transport aquatic vegetation in Iowa. Once out of the water, leave the plants onshore to dry and compost or move dried plants to your garden where they make excellent mulch.
- Lakeshore property owners on a public lake can physically remove a 15 foot wide path of vegetation for navigation to the main lake without a permit; you cannot use herbicides to remove the aquatic plants in a publicly-owned lake. Contact the DNR fisheries office in your area if you have questions.

Learn more about aquatic plants in ponds at www.iowadnr.gov/pondplants.

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