



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa pheasant population survey begins Aug. 1

The extent of impact that a cold and snowy late winter and heavy rains and flooding in April and May had on pheasant nesting success will likely be seen when the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducts its annual pheasant counts.

The statewide survey takes place Aug. 1-15.

The survey is conducted by Iowa DNR staff who drive 218, 30 mile routes on gravel roads at dawn on mornings with heavy dew. Hen pheasants will move their broods to the edge of the gravel road to dry off before they begin feeding, which makes them easier to count.

“Conditions for the survey are important as the accuracy of the counts depend on the dew conditions when the routes are run,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist for the Iowa DNR.

What staff see when they drive the routes is anybody’s guess. Winter began mild but ended under heavy snow and bitter cold temps. Spring wasn’t much better – below normal temperature and heavy rain across much of the state. Not exactly a recipe for growing a pheasant and quail population.

“We started receiving reports of staff seeing pheasant broods in late May and hearing quail calls through the spring and summer which are both positive signs,” he said. “It will be interesting to see the survey results.”

The August roadside survey has been conducted over the same routes since 1962. In addition to pheasants and quail, the survey collects data on partridge, cottontails and jackrabbits. Results will be posted online at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey by Sept. 10. Iowa’s pheasant season begins Oct. 26.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.

Hooking summer catfish

Fishing for catfish is a summer tradition for many Iowa families. Invite someone new to come along this year to share the fun and memories.

When the bite for other fish slows down in the heat of Iowa summers, you can always count on channel catfish. They are biting in every stream of any size, in all lakes and many farm ponds.

“Catfish will bite most of the time, no matter what the water temperature,” explains Daniel Vogeler, Iowa DNR fisheries technician. “They’re just as available from shore as boat.”

Bring along two coolers with ice, one to keep your bait firm and fresh and another to keep your catch cold and preserve that great taste.

Catfish have a great sense of smell and taste. Try prepared dip baits, chicken livers, minnows or chubs, green sunfish, bluegill, crawdads, frogs, night crawlers or dead, but fresh, gizzard shad.

Lakes stratify, or form layers, this time of year, with cool, oxygen-deprived waters sinking to the bottom. Do not fish in water deeper than 8 to 10 feet.

Look for areas with vegetation, brush piles or rock. Fish the upper ends of the larger reservoirs where the water is shallower and baitfish like gizzard shad gather. Use baits fished on the bottom or suspended off the bottom with a bobber and let current or breeze move the bait to find active catfish.

Iowa rivers are loaded with catfish. Look for fish around downed trees and brush piles, but don’t overlook rock piles or other objects that deflect water and form a current seam. Position your bait just upstream of brush piles so the scent of the bait is carried downstream into the structure to draw the catfish out. Anchor the bait with a heavy weight so it doesn’t drift into snags. If fishing the big rivers, try upstream and on the tips of wing dykes and wing dams on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Find more tips for catching, cleaning and cooking catfish on the DNR website at fishing.iowadnr.gov.

Media Contact: Daniel Vogeler, Fisheries Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-336-1840.

Governor Reynolds proclaims July as Lakes Appreciation Month



Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed a proclamation declaring July as Lakes Appreciation Month on July 16.

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On July 16, the Iowa DNR and its partners attended a proclamation signing recognizing Iowa's lakes as a prized and valuable resource to the state and its citizens.

Iowa's lakes and reservoirs provide valuable habitat for aquatic vegetation and wildlife, critical drinking water, irrigation, energy, recreation and scenic beauty.

Lakes provide a rich history and aesthetic feature to Iowa's landscape, and serve an important role in the quality of life for Iowans. Protecting Iowa's lakes and reservoirs is a top priority to ensure the resource for future generations.

Peak camping season extended at seven campgrounds

DES MOINES — The Iowa DNR is extending its peak camping season to mid-October at seven campgrounds as an effort to improve park management at some of Iowa's most popular camping destinations.

The new peak season will begin May 1 and end October 15 at the following campgrounds:

- Ledges State Park
- Maquoketa Caves State Park
- Palisades-Kepler State Park
- Pikes Peak State Park

- Walnut Woods State Park
- Backbone South Lake Campground
- Volga River Lakeview Campground

“We’re continuing the rates and extending the peak season through mid-October to allow for proper maintenance and staffing in our parks,” said Todd Coffelt, chief of state parks bureau for the Iowa DNR. “These campgrounds tend to draw more campers throughout the year and adding two weeks to the season will reflect the true usage of our campgrounds during these months.”

Overnight camping fees during the peak season range from \$11-\$16 for modern, electric and non-electric sites and \$9-\$14 for non-modern, electric and non-electric sites with an additional \$3 fee per night for all standard full hook-up sites.

Outdoor groups sponsor open house for novice, lapsed hunters

A coalition of outdoor organizations is hosting an open house showcasing opportunities to get involved with the outdoors through hunting, shooting sports and fishing. The event – Hunt Iowa Social – is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m., Aug. 19, at the Saylorville Fire Department, 211 NW 54th Avenue, in Des Moines.

Area conservation groups and retailers will be on hand to answer questions and discuss different ways to get involved or increase hunting knowledge and skills. The first 150 attendees will receive coupon for a free sandwich and drink. Attendees who preregister will be entered in a drawing for prizes awarded during the open house. Preregistration is available online at <https://conta.cc/2SmLEdJ>.

The open house features a sensory safari trailer that displays various game animals, birds, pelts and horns from around the world. The Turn-in-Poachers trailer will display mounts of illegally harvested Iowa fish and wildlife.

This family-friendly event is made possible by the Iowa Wildlife Federation, Iowa DNR, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Safari Club International, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Izaak Walton League, Delta Waterfowl, Neil Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Turn in Poachers of Iowa, Iowa Hunter Education Instructor Association, Blank Park Zoo and the Iowa Bowhunter's Association.

Media Contact: Jamie Cook, Iowa State Coordinator, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, 859-779-0222 or jcook@pheasantsforever.org.

Counting turkeys

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for help with its annual turkey population estimates in July and August.

Participation is easy – just note the date and county in which the turkey was seen, if it was an adult female or adult male – males have beards on their breast – and whether there were young poults (baby turkeys). There is a link to an online survey and survey card at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Turkey-Hunting> for those willing to help.

The DNR has mailed survey cards to select turkey hunters who are asked to provide the date and county in which the turkey was seen. If you did not receive a survey card, you are still encouraged to report turkey sightings using the Iowa DNR webpage link. An excellent video of hen turkeys with poults can be viewed on the Iowa DNR's Facebook page.

Annual population surveys conducted by the DNR are an important component of the species management plans, which includes providing hunting opportunities. All participation is appreciated.

Media Contact: Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958.

August is National Shooting Sports Month

Des Moines – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced its involvement in National Shooting Sports Month, in partnership with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), by offering a series of classes teaching shooting and outdoor skills to individuals with little or no experience.

Created to encourage participation in the shooting sports and emphasize firearms safety, National Shooting Sports Month will take place throughout the month of August.

“We are truly excited to see NSSF promoting National Shooting Sports Month,” said Chris Van Gorp, shooting sports coordinator for the Iowa DNR. “This is the perfect incentive for our regular range customers to introduce someone new to the sport they enjoy and for those who haven’t been out target shooting lately to get back out to there for some practice. We’re also offering a great promotion this month at both Banner and Olofson Shooting Ranges. For every paid hour of range time or round of clays during the month of August, you will be entered into a drawing for an annual range pass valued at \$240. The winner will have the option to upgrade that pass to a family annual range pass for an additional \$60. If you’re a fan of the shooting sports, or just want to give target shooting a try, come visit us to see what we have to offer.”

“Last year’s National Shooting Sports Month was a tremendous success, thanks to hundreds of ranges and retailers across the country reminding people about the fun and excitement of target shooting,” said Zach Snow, NSSF director, Retail & Range Business Development.

Whether you’re an experienced target shooter, a hunter or a person just becoming interested in acquiring a first firearm and learning how to shoot, NSSF invites you to head out to the range during National Shooting Sports Month so you can improve your shooting and firearm safety skills.

Visit letsgoshooting.org to learn more.

Be sure to “Like” NSSF’s Facebook page to see how others across the country are celebrating this special event. NSSF and [Iowa DNR] encourage you to share your National Shooting Sports Month experience on social media and to use the hashtag #LetsGoShooting.

Events Happening at Banner and Olofson Shooting Range in August

Pre-Register for classes at <https://bit.ly/30FNYzv>.

August 1: Trail Cameras – How/When/Where (Olofson)

August 3: First Shots Seminar (Banner)

August 8: Hunting with a New Hunter (Olofson)

August 10: Dutch Oven Cooking (Olofson)

August 10: 22 Rimfire Shoot - Rifle and/or Handgun (Banner)

August 15: Dove Hunting 101 (Olofson)

August 17: Learn to Shoot – Basic Wingshooting (Olofson)

August 17: Bowling Pin Shoot (Banner)

August 21: Learn to Hunt: Waterfowl ID, Hunter Regulations & Gear (Olofson)

August 22: Access 101 – Finding a Place to Hunt (Olofson)

August 24: First Shots Seminar (Olofson)

August 28: Learn to Hunt: Waterfowl Gear, Scouting and Decoy Spreads (Olofson)

August 29: Treestand Setup and Safety (Olofson)

The Butch Olofson Range is at 11652 NW Nissen Drive, Polk City

The Banner Range is at 13796 Elk Horn Street, Indianola

For more information on the shooting ranges in Iowa, go to <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Places-to-Hunt-Shoot> and click on Iowa Shooting Ranges.

First Shots Programs:

First Shots makes getting started in recreational shooting very easy - and, best of all, it's **free**! At this seminar, participants will receive: an educational introduction to the safe and recreational use of firearms, a clear understanding of the local requirements for owning and purchasing a firearm, individual and group training, a rundown of shooting sports opportunities for all levels of interest, and a chance to give shooting a try!

All firearms, ammunition and targets will be provided.

Snacks and drinks will be provided.

All participants that pre-register will receive the following items from NSSF:

- Safety Glasses (Howard Leight)
- Ear Protection (Howard Leight)
- Shoot-N-C Targets (Birchwood Casey)
- .22LR Ammo (Aguila) (25 rounds per participant)
- First Shots Pen
- Shooting Sports & Safety Brochure

ABOUT NSSF

The National Shooting Sports Foundation is the trade association for the firearms industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF has a membership of more than 12,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen's organizations and publishers. For more information, visit www.nssf.org.

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