



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2019

- [Iowa's dove season begins Sept. 1](#)
- [Iowa's September teal hunting season begins Sept. 1](#)
- [Iowa's rabbit, squirrel season opens Aug. 31](#)
- [Iowa DNR investigating ginseng case at Geode State Park](#)
- [2019 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant applications due Oct. 15](#)
- [Archery range closes at Princeton Wildlife area, gun range still open](#)

Iowa's dove season begins Sept. 1

Iowa's sunflower and wheat fields will be popular places on Sept. 1, when thousands of hunters slip into the standing flowers and field edges in the early morning darkness for the opening day of dove hunting season.

Fast paced and fun, dove hunting can be done by nearly everyone regardless of skill level or mobility. It doesn't require expensive equipment to participate, only clothes that blend in to the background, a bucket and plenty of shells. There's a lot of action with a steady stream of doves coming in.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) includes a list of wildlife areas at www.iowadnr.gov/doves where dove plots were planted. Hunters are strongly encouraged to scout their areas before the season opens especially in southwest and western Iowa where May rains likely impacted many dove fields and plantings may have failed.

Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist with the Iowa DNR, said hunters looking for Plan B may want to focus on private land where farmers impacted by the flooding did a preventive planting. They could also look for silage or hay fields, harvested small grain fields, grazed pastures or feedlots.

"It really comes down to scouting, getting out there and looking at the area. If you're on a public area look to see if the dove fields got in, if it matured and got mowed. Then scout it a day or two ahead of the season to see if and how the doves are using it," he said.

He said there will likely be more hunters out and about because the season opens on a weekend.

"Hunters should maintain good spacing and stay in their shooting lanes and most importantly practice common courtesy," Bogenschutz said.

All dove hunters are required to register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP). It's free, fast and the information is used to help determine participation and harvest. Register by following the instructions at www.iowadnr.gov/doves or by calling 1-855-242-3683.

Dove season is Sept. 1-Nov. 29. Shooting hours are one half hour before sunrise to sunset. Daily bag limit is 15 (mourning or Eurasian collared) with a possession limit of 30. Hunters are reminded that their gun must be plugged to hold no more than three shells. If hunting public areas north of I-80, hunters should check to see if nontoxic shot is required.

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

Iowa's September teal hunting season begins Sept. 1

Iowa's 16-day statewide teal-only hunting season begins September 1 and all indicators are pointing towards hunters having a good year in Iowa.

"We likely had good production on our marshes this spring and our wetlands are in their normal late summer conditions," said Orrin Jones, state waterfowl biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "Teal are an abundant species that is lightly harvested. It's a fun species to hunt because they decoy fairly easily and often will make a few passes over the marsh, which makes it a good season to bring a young or novice hunter along."

Part of the attraction to teal hunting, in addition to more comfortable weather, is that hunters don't need a lot of gear to have an enjoyable hunt - just a dozen or two decoys, camouflage to blend in with the background and boots or waders (or a dog) to get any downed birds.

Jones suggested hunters prepare for the season by going through their equipment and replacing any that's worn out or broken and spend some time scouting the areas they plan to hunt.

"Scouting is an important part of waterfowl hunting and is especially important for teal hunting. Finding shallow wetlands with vegetation is a key to success. It's tough to predict when the birds are going to push through but hunting a wetland with water and food will improve the chances to find teal," he said.

Because this is a teal-only hunting season, properly identifying teal is crucial.

"Set up in a place with good visibility and use the sun to your advantage either over your shoulder or at your back. Look closely to determine if it's a teal and if you're unsure, give them a pass - they'll come around again," Jones said.

The September teal season is a bonus season that does not count against the number of days available for the regular duck season. It has different shooting hours from regular

duck season; shooting hours for teal season begins at sunrise and ends at sunset. Hunters are required to limit their gun to holding no more than three shells and must use nontoxic shot only. The daily bag limit is six teal with a possession limit of 18.

Federal Duck Stamp now available wherever Iowa hunting licenses are sold

New this year is the ability for hunters to purchase their federal duck stamp wherever they purchase their Iowa hunting and fishing licenses. Hunters will receive a temporary e-stamp that is valid for 45 days. The physical stamp will arrive in the mail.

Waterfowl hunters are required to purchase an Iowa migratory game bird fee and the federal duck stamp, in addition to having a valid Iowa hunting license and habitat fee, in order to hunt waterfowl.

Media Contact: Orrin Jones, State Waterfowl Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-357-3517.

Iowa's rabbit, squirrel season opens Aug. 31

The good news for Iowa's cottontail rabbit hunters is that Iowa has a strong population of rabbits, similar to last year, with only the east central part of the state seeing a decline in numbers. The better news for hunters is Iowa's cottontail rabbit season begins Aug. 31 statewide.

"It should be another great year for rabbit hunting not only for experienced hunters, but for young or novice hunters who can learn necessary skills with little competition," said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Last year, an estimated 20,500 hunters harvested more than 123,000 cottontail rabbits. The most popular way to hunt is with a shotgun walking brushy areas with grass next to crop fields in the morning or evening. It can be done individually or with a group of friends.

Rabbit hunting does not require a significant investment or high tech equipment, just a shotgun and some shells. Rabbit is a lean, low fat meat and popular table fare considered a delicacy in many culinary circles.

Cottontail rabbit season is Aug. 31 to Feb. 28, 2020. The daily limit is 10 rabbits with a possession limit of 20. Jackrabbit season is closed. While wearing blaze orange clothing is not required to hunt rabbits, it is recommended. Shooting hours for rabbits is sunrise to sunset.

Iowa's cottontail rabbit population estimates are included in the recently completed August roadside survey of upland wildlife species. Results will likely be published around the first week of September at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey.

Iowa's squirrel population generally follows the acorn production and last year saw good production statewide, with white oak and bur oak leading the way.

Squirrel hunting is an inexpensive way to introduce novices to hunting with little competition and is a great way for experienced hunters to get their equipment out from storage and sharpen their outdoor skills before pheasant and deer seasons begin. The same skills necessary for squirrel hunting are also used for spring turkey hunting.

Last year, nearly 17,000 squirrel hunters harvested 81,000 squirrels.

“Squirrels are definitely an underutilized resource,” said Jim Coffey, forest wildlife research biologist with the Iowa DNR.

Squirrel season is Aug. 31 to Jan. 31, 2020, with a daily bag limit of six squirrels and a possession limit of 12. There is no restriction on shooting hours. Both the gray squirrel and the fox squirrel can be taken in Iowa.

Hunters looking for places to go rabbit or squirrel hunting should use Iowa’s online hunting atlas at www.iowadnr.gov/hunting, with more than 600,000 acres of public land that allows hunting.

Media Contacts: Rabbits - Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828. Squirrels – Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958.

Iowa DNR investigating ginseng case at Geode State Park

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is investigating two individuals from Illinois as part of a ginseng case that began on August 11 at Geode State Park.

“Geode State Park has a history of ginseng cases involving nonresidents. We saw some signs that indicated to us that these individuals may be here for ginseng,” said Dan Henderson, state conservation officer with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Henderson said staff approached Tak Hyun Kim, 60, and Seung Thee Min, 63, both from Forrest Park, Ill., who were allegedly found in possession of a shovel and 125 ginseng plants, which were seized as evidence. The investigation is ongoing and charges are expected.

Ginseng may be legally harvested in Iowa from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31. An Iowa ginseng harvester permit is required to harvest wild ginseng. However, ginseng may not be harvested from any state public land, including state parks.

Media Contact: Dan Henderson, State Conservation Officer, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 319-653-1635.

2019 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant applications due Oct. 15

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Wildland Fire Program, working with the U.S. Forest Service, has grant money available for Iowa's rural fire departments to help battle wildfires.

The grant, due Oct. 15, offers funding assistance for wildfire suppression equipment, slide in units, hoses, nozzles, adapters, portable tanks and pumps, personal protective equipment and communications equipment. Additionally, this grant allows for special requests from fire departments with special needs tied directly to wildfire suppression.

The grant provides 50 percent reimbursement for wildland fire equipment with a maximum reimbursement grant of \$3,500 per department.

All Iowa volunteer fire departments were mailed information about the 2019 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant. The grant application package and Wildland Fire Report form are available at www.iowadnr.gov/fire.

Fire departments should submit a Wildland Fire Report whenever they respond to a wildland fire or provide assistance to a prescribed or controlled wildland fire. Departments actively returning these reports can receive priority points in the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant application scoring process.

Media Contact: Gail Kantak, DNR State Wildland Fire Supervisor, 515-233-8067.

Archery range closes at Princeton Wildlife area, gun range still open

The Princeton archery range at the Princeton Wildlife Area in Scott County has been closed due to concerns regarding the existing range infrastructure and ongoing maintenance costs. Range use had declined over the years to the point where the cost to keep it open outweighed the benefit to the community.

The Princeton gun range is not impacted by this closure and remains open for business.

Officials with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), who manage the range, are in the process of identifying a location in Scott County to locate a new archery range. The Iowa DNR plans to convert the former range back to wildlife habitat for public hunting.

For more information, contact Curt Kemmerer, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-357-2035.