



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2020

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Iowa's final spring turkey season begins April 29

Iowa hunters have reported harvesting nearly 8,600 turkeys so far this spring, making the 2020 season one of the more successful seasons to date, with the fourth – and longest – season still to come.

Iowa's fourth and final spring turkey season is April 29 to May 17.

Turkey virus study seeking additional samples

Hunters who bag a turkey this spring are encouraged to keep one of the lower legs to be tested for the presence of Lymphoproliferative Disease (LPDV).

"Our goal is to collect 500 samples from across the state, with each county represented," said Jim Coffey, forest wildlife research biologist for the Iowa DNR. "All samples are appreciated and will only give us better information on the presence and distribution of this disease." Hunters have requested around 200 postage paid virus sample packets.

To provide a sample, after hunters' tag and report their bird, they can cut the leg off at the joint where the feathers end and the leg becomes scaly, wrap the leg in a paper towel, put it in a zip top bag and place it in the freezer. They can then go online to <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Turkey-Hunting> and click on the Wild Turkey Sample Submission Form on the right side of the page. They will receive a postage paid envelope, instruction sheet with short questionnaire, and an additional zip top bag.

Hunters are encouraged to send one whole lower leg, however if they would like to keep the spur it can be removed and the scaled portion above the spur can be submitted.

Mushroom hunters entering the timber

Iowa's fourth spring turkey season coincides with morel mushroom season, putting two popular springtime activities in the timber at the same time.

Mushroom hunters should avoid wearing colors associated with male turkeys – red, white and blue – and are encouraged to wear some blaze orange clothing. If mushroom hunters encounter a turkey hunter, they should quietly back away to minimize impacting the hunt.

Walleye netting goals and season shortened this spring due to COVID-19

Iowa's current State of Emergency to help stop the spread of COVID-19 changed how the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) collected walleye this spring to spawn at Rathbun and Spirit Lake fish hatcheries.

"Our employees are our most valuable resource," said Jay Rudacille, DNR Warm and Coolwater Fish Culture supervisor. "Because of the coronavirus pandemic, we only used local staff to collect walleye broodstock and shortened the netting season to reduce staff interactions and maximize the safety of every employee."

"We adjusted our goals to limit the time crews were out collecting adult walleyes. Even with reduced walleye collection goals, we will still meet requests for our highest priority needs and locations," said Rudacille.

Walleye broodstock collection at Rathbun Lake wrapped up after five nights of netting. It usually takes 8-10 nights of netting in a normal year. The goal at Rathbun Lake was to collect 170 females and three crews exceeded this goal by 26 percent.

Two crews at Spirit Lake netted three nights and surpassed the 650 egg-filled females quota by 12 percent. Their netting efforts were supplemented by electrofishing in East Okoboji Lake and the spillway connecting East Okoboji and Spirit Lakes.

Two crews netted a total of five nights at Black Hawk Lake, providing nearly 143 quarts of eggs, which exceeded their goal by 43 percent.

Staff at Rathbun Fish Hatchery are incubating 544 quarts of walleye eggs, including 143 quarts from Black Hawk Lake. At Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery, 617 walleye females were spawned, producing almost 540 quarts of eggs. A total of 84 million walleye hatchlings will be produced from the 2020 egg collection.

Iowa is one of the top producers of walleye fry (newly hatched fish) in the United States, second only to Minnesota. Because of reduced production goals, the DNR will only release 82.9 million walleye fry this spring instead of the original goal of 142.6 million.

"There was nothing normal about this year, but I'm very proud of what our netting crews and hatchery personnel were able to accomplish," Rudacille said.

While the majority of walleyes are stocked as fry, some are cultured in Iowa DNR hatcheries and stocked at different sizes. More than 1.1 million two-inch walleyes are expected to be stocked into lakes, rivers, and streams across the state this summer. Larger 6- 9-inch fingerlings (more than 310,000) will be stocked in lakes later this fall.

With little natural reproduction, Iowa's walleye populations rely heavily upon stockings. Walleyes are stocked throughout Iowa into natural lakes, interior rivers, flood control reservoirs and selected larger man-made lakes.

Media Contact: Jay Rudacille, DNR Warm and Coolwater Fish Culture Supervisor, 641-647-2406.

Get Ready for “Camp-In Kickoff,” May 1-3

DES MOINES – Iowa state parks invite you to celebrate Camp-*In* Kickoff by enjoying the outdoors your way this weekend.

Typically, the first weekend in May marks the launch of the annual camping season for Iowa state parks through dozens of events and programs across the state. With 2020 as the centennial year, the DNR still hopes to celebrate this annual tradition, despite event cancellations and a delay in campground openings due to COVID-19.

To take part in Camp-*In* Kickoff, here are ways you can enjoy the outdoors either at home or by safely visiting a state park with just your family. All these ideas can be found on the web page: <http://iowadnr.gov/campin>:

- Camp in your own backyard or your living room! Set up a tent, start a bonfire, cook some s'mores and have fun! Post your family photos to social media or to the DNR's Facebook page with the hashtags: #IowaDNR #IowaStateParks or #IowaStateParks100
- Find coloring pages, a scavenger hunt, and fun videos to share with your family about Iowa state parks at <http://iowadnr.gov/campin>. The coloring pages include an owl, deer, camping scenes and more, and were drawn by Paula Streeter, an artist in the [20 Artists, 20 Parks](#) program.
- If you visit a state park this weekend, participate in the “**Find Peace, Pick Up a Piece**” challenge. Bring a trash bag and gloves with you and help pick up litter, then dispose of it at home in the spirit of “carry in, carry out.” Many spring clean-up events have been cancelled in state parks, so we appreciate your help!

“We greatly appreciate our parks visitors and can’t wait to see them later this season,” said Todd Coffelt, chief of state parks bureau for the DNR. “Until then, we are thinking of you and are getting parks ready for the camping season. Enjoy the outdoors with your family during Camp-In Kick-off in the way that is safest and fun for you.”

Please remember that if you visit state parks, **wash your hands regularly, avoid touching your face, and bring supplies from home including disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer and other hygiene products. Also please stay home if you feel sick.**

You can visit the [DNR's COVID-19 web page](#) for more information about how COVID-19 is affecting DNR events, facilities and services.

Media Contact: Todd Coffelt, Chief of Iowa DNR State Parks Bureau, 515-725-8485.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working with state and local officials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and has transitioned employees to work remotely. DNR offices are closed to the public during this time and only available by appointment.

In other efforts to further reduce the spread of Covid-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for purchasing licenses, submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

The **FREE Go Outdoors Iowa app** is available at the App store and Google Play. The Go Outdoors Iowa app allows users to purchase and view hunting and fishing licenses and submit harvest and quota reports, all from your cell phone.

Full list of DNR's online services: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/about-dnr/about-dnr/online-services-databases>.

Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by Covid-19: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Covid-19>.

Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to Covid-19: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Social-Media-Press-Room/Disaster-Assistance#3057321-covid---19-outbreak>.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time. If you need to contact DNR staff you can reach them by email or phone or by calling (515) 725-8200.