



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Fogle Lake Wildlife Area is Southern Iowa's outdoor recreation secret

Diagonal, Iowa - Tucked away on the northwest corner of the small town of Diagonal, sits a nearly 400-acre recreation destination that is part lake, part park and a whole lot of wildlife area.

Fogle Park was the product of visionary leaders in the small Ringgold County community of fewer than 400 people, who felt there was a need for outdoor recreation and worked hard to get it done.

Fogle Lake Wildlife Area has been developed and managed through a partnership between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the City of Diagonal. The lake and wildlife area are managed by the Iowa DNR and the park is managed by the city.

Wildlife biologist Chad Paup and his crew with the Iowa DNR's Grand River Wildlife Unit, recently removed cottonwood, ash, elm and hackberry trees and hedges from the drainage on the north portion of the wildlife area as a habitat improvement project geared towards benefiting grassland birds.

Standing at the north parking lot, the familiar sounds of pheasants crowing and of bobwhite quail whistling comes from all around.

"Our goal here is to promote grassland bird nesting and brood rearing and those trees are not really desirable for a grassland area," he said. "Cutting trees is a never ending challenge. We'll be back again in seven to ten years when the trees return."

Paup said the trees will remain in the ravines to provide habitat for other bird species, snakes and for rabbits. "We get rave reviews from hunters from Michigan, Pennsylvania and around Iowa who travel here to hunt rabbits," Paup said.

Improving the grassland area not only benefits game species, but many non-game species as well.

The sounds of dickcissels, bobolinks and meadowlarks fill the air. This parcel was acquired from the Park family in 2010, which was important for the wildlife area development not only to create quality habitat, but it was the final piece of the lake's watershed.

The Fogle Lake dam was scheduled completion on Nov. 30, 1995. The dam created a 45-acre quality fishery that started off strong and continues to do well today.

Anglers from across southwest Iowa include Fogle Lake in their rotation either targeting a hot bite or looking to get away from the crowds. The lake offers good fishing for largemouth bass of all sizes with lots of 12-17-inch fish and some over 20-inches, bluegills up to 8-1/2-inch, 9-10-inch crappies and redear sunfish, with a few walleyes and channel catfish mixed in. Local lake supporters' purchase and stock fingerling sized walleyes from a private hatchery and stock them every other year.

Fisheries biologist Andy Jansen said anglers should target in-lake habitat for the best success. "Focus on the brush piles – there are quite a few on the lake, the rock reef and two gravel spawning areas," Jansen said.

The local convenience store offers night crawlers and a few camping supplies for sale. The closest full service bait shop is about 21 miles north, in Afton. Boats are restricted to operating at less than 5 miles per hour (no-wake).

### **Staying where you play**

Fogle Lake's 45 site campground traditionally fills a week or more before major holidays. The four primitive cabins are busy all year and are popular with hunters in spring and fall, and with ice anglers in the winter. Steve Newton, who is a member of the City of Diagonal Parks Board, estimates 20-25 percent of the fall to spring use comes from nonresidents. The parks board is in the process of adding the first modern cabin to the park. It will feature a bedroom, shower, small kitchen and more.

While each holiday is busy, the Diagonal Lions Labor Day Celebration is the largest event in the community.

The celebration includes tractor pulls, pedal pulls, bike races and a "glow" run at dark through the park, attracting runners of all skill levels. Money raised from the events and concession is used for park improvements.

"We have a lot of campers who come straight from the State Fair to Fogle Lake without going home," Newton said.

The park has one playground with a second in process of being added, a basketball court, sand volleyball court, grass hiking trail with benches and picnic tables set along the way. Canoes, kayaks and paddleboats area available to use free of charge from the storage building, but users are responsible for their own lifejacket.

**Media Contact:** Chad Paup, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-783-2166.

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## Fawning season is underway, watch for deer to be on the move

Fawning season is here which means car deer collisions will likely tick up and calls to conservation groups about abandoned fawns will begin.

Iowa's peak fawning season stretches from middle May to middle June, followed by a second and much smaller peak fawning season in July. Fawning season is preceded by yearling bucks being disbursed by the does as she prepares to deliver this year's fawns.

These newly on their own yearlings go through a learning curve without adults around, which leads to deer being more visible during the day and more young deer involved in vehicle collisions. Drivers are encouraged to use November rut defensive driving techniques like reducing their speed and avoiding distractions and scanning road ditches during this time.

After pushing out the yearlings, the does will also be on the move looking for a spot where she feels safe and isolated to give birth. With some urban greenbelt areas experiencing high water, that means the fawns could show up in flower beds, un-mowed yard or field corners or fencerows.

"We see an increase in phone calls this time of year about fawns the caller found "abandoned" in their yard. The reality is that the fawn has been put there by the doe because she determined it to be a safe place and will return frequently to nurse it," said Jim Coffey, forest wildlife research biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "Laying motionless is a survival technique. Fawns are relatively inactive for the first week or so until its legs are ready for it to follow the doe on its own."

The white spots on a fawns coat is nature's camouflage designed to simulate sunlight penetrating the trees on the forest floor, and will disappear over time, being replaced by brown fur as it grows.

"Our best advice is, don't disturb it, don't touch it, and don't pick it up. The doe is caring for it, in fact she's probably watching you but you can't see her," Coffey said.

As part of the Iowa DNR's chronic wasting disease management plan, fawns will not be rehabilitated to avoid spreading the always fatal disease.

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## Join in on the family fun of fishing during free fishing weekend

Iowa residents can try fishing without buying a license on June 5, 6 and 7 as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) free fishing weekend. All other regulations remain in place.

“Grab your tackle box, take the family, and get your lines in the water this weekend,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa DNR’s Fisheries Bureau. “Enjoy your time together, make lasting memories and put your worries behind you.”

Free fishing weekend is a great time to take kids fishing. Outdoor fun awaits at hundreds of Iowa lakes, thousands of miles of rivers or a neighborhood pond. There are plenty of options to help you find a spot that is less crowded, so you can easily keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other groups. If the parking lot is full when you get to a fishing spot, pick a new location or come back at a time that is not so busy like early morning or later at night.

Keep the fun going all summer long by buying a fishing license. It’s easy to buy a fishing license with the DNR Go Outdoors Iowa online licensing system at <https://gooutdoorsiowa.com/>. You can download the public Go Outdoors IA mobile app for iPhone and Android devices to buy and store your fishing license, so you will always have access to your license no matter where you are. Yearly, seven-day, or 24-hour fishing licenses are available.

Find a list of stocked lakes and ponds that are easily accessible in parks and along trails on the Iowa DNR’s interactive Iowa Community Fisheries Atlas at [www.iowadnr.gov/fishlocal](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishlocal).

Get tips for taking kids fishing and catching crappie and bluegills on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Ready-to-Fish](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Ready-to-Fish).

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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.