



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Hunting News

Conservation and Recreation

Traditional Thanksgiving pheasant hunt will be a little different this year



With many holiday gatherings put on hold due to the pandemic, pheasant hunting is one way to keep an annual holiday tradition alive, while staying apart.

“Pheasant hunting is a big part of Thanksgiving for many families but with health experts advising against gatherings, this tradition won’t look the same as in year’s past, but it can still be part of the holiday,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

He said hunters who do not live in the same house are encouraged to drive separately to the hunting spot and when they arrive, to space out and not congregate while in the field.

What they’ll find in the field is a pheasant season that’s off to a good start.

“I’m hearing really good reports, good pheasant numbers from all parts of the state despite the state experiencing an unusual number of days with gale-force winds and temperatures in the 70s,” said Bogenschutz. “Everybody that’s hunting in good cover is finding and getting birds.”

That’s good news heading in to the Thanksgiving holiday and might be just enough incentive to delay the trip to the couch until the afternoon hunt is completed.

Iowa’s pheasant season closes Jan. 10, 2021.

Places to Hunt

The Iowa DNR’s [online hunting atlas](#) lists nearly 700,000 acres of public hunting land, including 22,000 acres of land enrolled in the popular Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) allowing hunter access to private land.

Each area on the atlas includes a link to a map with property boundaries, the size of the area, habitat type, species of wildlife likely found, if nontoxic shot is required and more. The map is available as a downloadable pdf that can be printed or saved to a smartphone.