



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 15, 2020

- [Stay safe as Iowa lakes freeze over](#)
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## Stay safe as Iowa lakes freeze over



The recent blast of arctic air is growing ice on lakes and ponds over much of Iowa. Anglers are ready to get out for the popular early ice fishing season.

“Many of us can’t wait to get out on the ice each winter,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of fisheries for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “Ice fishing is a fun, inexpensive activity for anglers of all ages to get outdoors and avoid cabin fever.”

The DNR recommends a minimum of four inches of clear ice for fishing and at least five inches for snowmobiles and ATVs.

“Check ice thickness as you make your way to your favorite fishing spot,” Larscheid said. “Ice conditions change constantly and its thickness can vary across the lake. Trust your instincts – if the ice does not look right, don’t go out.”

Early ice offers an excellent chance for success. If fish are finicky, cut a series of holes and spend 15 minutes at each hole. Use small baits and light line.

### Safety tips on the ice

- No ice is 100 percent safe.
- New ice is usually stronger than old ice.

- Don't go out alone - if the worst should happen, someone will be there to call for help or to help rescue.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- Check ice thickness as you go out - there could be pockets of thin ice or places where ice recently formed.
- Avoid off-colored snow or ice. It is usually a sign of weakness.
- The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process.
- Bring along these basic items to help keep you safe: hand warmers, ice cleats to help prevent falls, ice picks (wear around your neck) to help you crawl out of the water if you fall in, a life jacket, a floating safety rope, a whistle to call for help, a basic first aid kit and extra dry clothes including a pair of gloves.

**Media Contact:** Joe Larscheid, Chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-201-3376.

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## Public comment period extended for 2020 State Forest Action Plan

DES MOINES – The comment period has been extended for the 2020 State Forest Action Plan until December 25, 2020.

The State Forest Action Plan includes a comprehensive assessment of forests in Iowa, which is a requirement of the Farm Bill and must be revised every 10 years in order for states to receive federal funding. It includes the status of forests in Iowa, recent trends and goals and strategies to address the next decade, along with forest information, forest health, urban and community forestry, fire management, forest stewardship, forest productivity and future climate conditions. The plan includes interactive GIS mapping features and additional websites and resources for readers to engage.

The plan is available for viewing and comment by [clicking here](#).

**Media Contact:** Gabriele Edwards, DNR Urban Forestry Program Specialist, (515) 725-8456, [Gabriele.Edwards@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Gabriele.Edwards@dnr.iowa.gov).

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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.