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Iowa's deer harvest on similar track as 2020

Iowa's hunters reported harvesting around 75,000 deer heading in to the final weekend of Iowa's shotgun deer season, which is similar to the 2020 deer harvest at the same point.

"We typically harvest another 9,000-10,000 deer during the late muzzleloader season, so with one more weekend for the second shotgun season, we should end up with a deer harvest around 100,000 again this year," said Tyler Harms, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "That's right where we've been over the last six years or so and where we want to be as far as our population goals are concerned."

Hunters have volunteered around 4,300 deer tissue samples to be tested for chronic wasting disease, resulting in one deer confirmed positive for the disease, and six deer suspected positive that are awaiting additional testing. These deer are all from areas where chronic wasting disease has already been confirmed in the wild.

The Iowa DNR is still looking for tissue samples from certain areas and is encouraging hunters willing to provide a sample to contact their local wildlife biologist and let them know where the deer was harvested. If the sample quota has been filled and the hunter would like to get the deer tested, they can do it by working with their wildlife biologist and submitting the sample through the new Hunter Submission pathway in partnership with the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

"We can help guide you through the process, and pull and submit the sample. We just need the hunter to complete the hunter submission form, which is available on our deer hunting webpage," Harms said. "We will include their samples with the regular DNR shipments to the lab, if they'd like, or they can send it in themselves."

The details and forms to submit a sample are available through the green hunter submission pathway button at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Deer-Hunting>

Antlerless tags are currently available in 25 counties, with a handful of counties likely to sell out soon. The listing of antlerless licenses available and in which county is online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Deer-Hunting> then click on the blue Current Hunting Quota Counts on the right side of the page.

"We hope our hunters will take advantage of these opportunities to harvest additional antlerless deer, especially in our priority areas where we have chronic wasting disease," Harms said. "Harvesting does in these areas helps to slow the spread of the disease by keeping the deer herd at the lower end of our population goal."

The antlerless tags also allow hunters to provide high quality lean protein to fellow Iowans through the Iowa Deer Exchange.

To sign up for the Iowa Deer Exchange to either donate deer or to receive deer, go to www.iowadnr.gov/deer then scroll down to Iowa's Deer Exchange Program link and fill out the required fields. The database creates a map and table with information deer donors and deer recipients can use to get connected. There is no cost to participate. It is illegal to sell wild fish and game in Iowa.

Hunters are reminded to report their harvest by midnight on the day after it is tagged or before taking it to a locker or taxidermist. The hunter whose name is on the transportation tag is responsible for making the report, even if the deer is donated through the Iowa Deer Exchange or through the Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) program. If no deer is harvested, no report is necessary.

Options to report your harvest include texting. Simply text the registration number on your deer tag to 1-800-771-4692 and follow the prompts. Hunters are still able to report their harvest online, by phone, or using the Go Outdoors Iowa app. Reporting using the app is straight forward, fast and easy. Hunters have their confirmation right on their phone and also receive it as an email.

Deer harvest numbers are an important component of Iowa's deer management plan.

Safety reminder

There were two hunting incidents over the weekend – one property damage and one injury.

- An individual was shooting at a running deer in Worth County around 1:30 p.m., Sunday, when the round fired from a .45-70 traveled over a hill toward Hwy. 105 and struck a vehicle. There were no injuries.
- Late Sunday afternoon, an individual was unloading their .350 Legend at the end of the hunt in Bremer County, when it discharged. The round went through the vehicle, striking the victim in the upper arm and grazing the torso. He was transported to Waverly Health Center where he was treated and released.

Hunters are encouraged to continue to keep safety as a focal point of the deer hunt through their hunting plan, and to practice the basics of gun safety whenever they are handling a gun – treat every gun as if it were loaded, keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction and keep the safety on until ready to shoot.

Second shotgun season runs through Dec. 19. Late muzzleloader season and the late split of archery season opens on Dec. 20.

Hemorrhagic disease

"We had an outbreak of hemorrhagic disease in Iowa primarily in counties bordering the Missouri River and encourage hunters who come across dead deer to call those in as we do track it," Harms said. "We've had a few hard frosts so the midge responsible for hemorrhagic disease is likely gone for the year."

Media Contact: Tyler Harms, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-777-5378.

DNR urban wood playhouse on display at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden



A children's playhouse constructed almost entirely from urban lumber is on display at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

Originally constructed for the 2021 Iowa State Fair, the playhouse showcases seven different species common to urban areas, including white oak, elm, honeylocust, maple, hickory, eastern redcedar, and black walnut.

Russ and Rhonda Frerichs of Ames constructed the playhouse from urban lumber that was milled by Bear Creek Hardwoods in Earlham and Breezy Hill Sawmill in Boone. Generous donations from the Iowa Arborist Association, the Iowa Woodland Owners Association, Beisser Lumber Company, Bear Creek Hardwoods, Lockwood Flooring, and Iowa Home Crafters helped to complete the project.

This playhouse highlights the unique ways lumber milled from trees grown in urban areas can be used. Hours and admission rates to the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden can be found on their website at www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/.

"Urban trees provide many benefits while alive, including shading homes and blocking the wind," said Gabriele Edwards, Urban Forestry Program Specialist with the Iowa DNR. "When these trees eventually have to be removed, there is a growing trend to mill this wood into lumber rather than chipping it into mulch or chopping to use as firewood."

Milling urban trees into lumber for Iowans to use for their wood building projects is a great way to make the most of this locally renewable resource. "Many of these trees have stood tall in neighborhoods for more than a half century," explains Edwards.

Urban lumber, produced from local trees and processed by local sawmills, is available to purchase at Habitat for Humanity ReStores in Des Moines and Iowa City. Urban wood is not for structural use (dimensional lumber) in homes, since it has not been "graded" to meet home building standards.

Learn more about urban lumber and wood characteristics of common urban species, and find a directory of wood processors in Iowa on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/urbanwood.

Media Contact: Gabriele Edwards, Urban Forestry Program Specialist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-822-1031.

Teaching outdoor skills courses scheduled this spring and summer

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is sponsoring six courses on how to teach outdoor skills for K–12 teachers, naturalists and other educators this spring and summer.

Hands-on sessions (indoors and outside) will provide introductory skills instruction and development, teaching materials and lesson plans. The cost of each course varies. Create an account on the [AEALearning website](#) to find the cost, registration deadline and requirements for each course.

- **Scholastic Clay Target Program (Coach)**, Field Day: March 5 at Olofson Shooting Range, Polk City

Learn the requirements to become a certified youth shotgun sports coach in the Scholastic Clay Target Program. **Participants must also register for the online [SCTP coaches course](#)** (completion required between February 1-28, 2022) **and the [field day](#)**. Participants should plan to bring a 12 or 20 gauge shotgun, shells, and eye and ear protection to the field day.

- **Basic Paddling Skills**, June 8-9 at Briggs Woods Park, Webster City

Participants will learn how to teach paddling skills to others through classroom and on-water (lake and river) instruction. Participants should dress for the weather, including fast-dry clothes and water shoes (or old sneakers that can get wet) and be prepared for mildly strenuous activity.

- **Introduction to Basic Outdoor Skills**, June 14-15 at Big Creek State Park (Beach Shelter), Polk City

Participants will receive introductory instruction and lesson plans for planning outings, map reading, hiking, paddling, fishing, archery, campfire cooking and basic firearm safety/shooting.

- **Fish Iowa! Basic Fishing**, June 23-24 at Kent Park Conservation Center, Oxford

Participants will learn to teach fish identification, fishing locations, casting techniques and cleaning and cooking fish. Participants will experience lake/pond fishing (including fishing from a kayak and/or canoe) and be introduced to other types of fishing. Peer teaching and small group work will be used to develop appropriate teaching strategies for individual teaching situations.

- **Archery**, June 28 at Olofson Shooting Range, Polk City

Participants will learn basic archery and archery instructional skills, as well as maintenance of archery equipment. Participants will receive *National Archery in the Schools* instructional materials. Individuals who register for this class will receive

information via email to register for the "Basic Archery Instructor" online course. **(Completion required between June 21-27, 2022.)**

- **Hunter Education**, July 20-21 at Olofson Shooting Range, Polk City

Learn the requirements to become a certified hunter education instructor, including firearm handling and safety, hunter education class requirements and policies and procedures.

Educators can earn license renewal for all six courses. Graduate credit is also available for the Introduction to Basic Outdoor Skills and Fish Iowa! Basic Fishing sessions.

Register for the how to teach outdoor skills courses through the AEALearning website at <https://aealearning.truenorthlogic.com/>. You will be asked to create an account if you do not already have one. After you login, enter "outdoor skills" in the course search to find registration information for each course.

Media Contact: Barb Gigar, Fish Iowa! Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-494-3891 or Edinfo@dnr.iowa.gov.

First Day Hikes at Iowa State Parks: Join the Fun with the Parks Passport and Guided Hikes

DES MOINES – So what are you doing over New Year's?

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Travel Iowa invite Iowans to step outside and enjoy Iowa state parks and forests in the [2022 First Day Hike Challenge](#). Visitors can ring in the New Year with the Parks Passport on their own, or by joining park staff on a guided hike.

"First Day Hikes are a popular tradition in state parks, and the Park Passport is a great way for people to enjoy winter hikes," said Sherry Arntzen, chief of the Iowa DNR's Parks, Forests and Preserves Bureau.

With the First Day Hike Challenge, park visitors can check into more than 50 participating state parks and forests on the Park Passport from Dec. 31 through Jan. 2. Visitors can explore as many parks as they wish -- every check-in will qualify for a prize drawing of a **two-night stay at a two-bedroom cabin at Lake Darling State Park, near Brighton**. Some restrictions and fees apply.

Hikers can experience the quiet beauty of nature in winter, and spectacular views, beautiful settings and cultural treasures. More than 20 parks and forests will host guided hikes on New Year's Day, including some providing hot chocolate and snacks. Participants should dress for winter conditions.

More details on First Day Hikes, including a list of guided hikes with times and meeting locations, are available online at www.iowadnr.gov/firstdayhikes. The State Park Passport is free and can be downloaded onto mobile devices at <https://explore.traveliowa.com/checkout/311/travel-iowa/1619/iowa-state-park-passport>. Visitors will find trail suggestions and directions from park staff under the "More Info" tab for each park on the Passport.

Hawkeye Wildlife Area as refuge reopens to the public Dec. 17

The 1,800-acre refuge section of Hawkeye Wildlife Area in Johnson County will reopen for public use on Dec. 17, for trapping and hunting game species, including hunting for geese.

All regulations, shooting hours, bag limits, and license and tag requirements apply during the respective seasons.

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