



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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## **DNR urges caution on the ice after snowmobile, ATV go through on the Okobojs**

SPIRIT LAKE, Iowa - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is encouraging ice anglers and snowmobilers to use caution when going out on the ice after a snowmobile and an ATV broke through the ice on West Okoboji Lake and East Okoboji Lake Thursday night. The individuals were rescued by nearby anglers, and then were treated and released from the local hospital.

Greg Harson, district supervisor for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Bureau, said he's received a number of calls Friday from people planning to come to the Iowa Great Lakes and his message is that the ice quality isn't as good as it has been in the past and to use caution if they plan to operate a snowmobile or atv on the lakes.

"There are a number of areas to avoid, like the points, ice heaves, the bridges and locations where geese are keeping the water open. The pressure ridges are opening and are hard to see. If we get skim ice then covered with snow, that can create a dangerous situation," he said. "Geese are keeping a large area open on Spirit Lake out from the pump house, so be really careful if going out on Big Spirit this weekend."

Harson stressed that there is always risk associated with going on any ice and that no ice is 100 percent safe. He said better quality ice is available away from the areas to avoid and encouraged everyone to check the ice thickness frequently and to bring a throwable floatation cushion, 50 feet of rope and a set of ice picks.

"The new snow is going to make identifying these hazards more challenging, and it's also going to insulate the ice from the cold temperatures and slow its growth. We all look forward to this time of year to enjoy these lakes, but need to think twice and if it doesn't look right or feel right, do not go out," he said.