



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2022

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Four additional community trout ponds stocked

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released between 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout at [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#), in Ames; [Banner Lake South](#), in Indianola; [Heritage Pond](#), in Dubuque; and [Sand Lake](#), in Marshalltown, as part of its cool weather trout program that brings trout to areas that cannot support them during the summer.

All spring community trout stockings will be unannounced this year. Check the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/trout to find out when the remaining community trout locations have been stocked.

The popular community trout stocking program is supported by the sales of the trout fee. Anglers need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can purchase a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit.

Find more information about trout fishing in Iowa on the [DNR trout fishing webpage](#).

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, regional fisheries supervisor, Northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

Walleye season opens May 7 on Iowa's Great Lakes

The 146th walleye fishing season officially opens May 7 at Spirit Lake, East and West Okoboji lakes.

"Walleye populations on the Iowa Great Lakes are in great shape," said Mike Hawkins, fisheries biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Walleye season opens the first Saturday in May and runs through February 14 each year on Spirit Lake, East Okoboji Lake and West Okoboji Lake. The protected slot limit on walleyes changed this year to 19 to 25 inches, with only one walleye over 25 inches allowed per day. Unlike the walleye season, the protected slot limit applies to Spirit Lake, East and West Okoboji Lake, Upper and Lower Gar Lake and Minnewashta Lake. The daily limit is three walleyes with a possession limit of six.

The walleye season will be opening in the Iowa Great Lakes, but the lakes offer great fishing for a variety of other species. Panfish, northern pike, and smallmouth and largemouth bass fishing can be very good as the water warms. Water levels on the Okoboji chain are near full pool, but Spirit Lake remains about 22 inches low. Use caution around shorelines and points and while loading and unloading boats at public ramps.

For many anglers, this will be their first trip on the water for the season. Check the safety equipment and make sure the boat is ready to get on the water. Boaters should also make sure their boat registration has been renewed at their local county recorder's office.

The Iowa Great Lakes Chamber of Commerce will host the 40th annual Great Walleye Weekend Fishing Contest in conjunction with the opener. For more information on the contest, visit their website at <https://okobojichamber.com/walleye-weekend/>.

Media Contact: Mike Hawkins, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-336-1840.

New catch-photo-release tournament encourages Iowa walleye anglers to report their catches

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is partnering with MyCatch by Angler's Atlas to conduct a statewide walleye fishing challenge starting May 1 through June 30. Anglers will have the chance to win weekly prizes while also contributing to fisheries research, helping improve walleye fishing in the state.

Participating anglers are encouraged to report all the walleye they catch in May and June through the MyCatch mobile app. DNR fisheries biologists will use the data entered to learn more about walleye populations across Iowa.

The Iowa Walleye Challenge uses the MyCatch mobile app to record the length of a fish. Participating anglers take a picture of the fish on a measuring device using the app.

Once the fish is reviewed by the catch team and meets the rules, it automatically appears on a live leaderboard where anglers can see who is in the lead to win prizes.

“This catch-photo-release tournament is a fun way for walleye anglers to help us expand our collection data by simply recording their catches,” said Jeff Kopaska, DNR fisheries research biometrician.

Anglers can register for the Iowa Walleye Challenge at <https://www.anglersatlas.com/tournament/553/2022-iowa-walleye-challenge>. There is a \$25 fee to enter the tournament.

Media Contact: Jeff Kopaska, Fisheries Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-204-8021.

Annual Volga State Recreation Area forestry field day set for May 24

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a forestry field day at Volga State Recreation Area on May 24, that will showcase different topics encountered by timber owners from oak regeneration to whether or not to hold a timber sale.

“Volga is a unique property and a great spot to hold an annual forestry field day because we’re doing a lot of different management onsite and you can highlight many different activities,” said Jason Walker, district forester for the Iowa DNR.

The forestry field day is showcasing six topics in two sessions. The morning session includes woodland oak regeneration, forest erosion control, and timber sales/markets. The afternoon session includes water quality, fisheries discussion and a forester open discussion. Each topic last 30-35 minutes and attendees will rotate through all of the topics.

“We’re hoping to expand our participation to include anyone who is interested in the outdoors or has an interest in the environment,” Walker said. “Participants will have the opportunity to see different things and ask questions to our panel of experts.”

Registration is required. Call the Fayette County Extension at 563-425-3331 to register. There is a \$15 fee for lunch. The field day will originate from the Volga State Recreation Area headquarters at 10225 Ivy Road, Fayette.

AGENDA

9:30 AM Registration

10 AM Travel to Sites

10:15 AM Concurrent Sessions (30-35 mins each)

- Woodland Oak Regeneration
- Forest Erosion Control
- Timber Sales/Markets

NOON Travel to sites – Lunch (\$15/RSVP Required) (NEIFAC Mini-Topic)

1:15 PM Concurrent Sessions (30-35 mins each)

- Water Quality
- Fisheries Discussion
- Ask a Forester Open Discussion

3 PM Field Day wrap up and final thoughts

4 PM (Optional) Northeast Iowa Forestry Advisory Council Meeting and BBQ
(Free Will Offering)

The Iowa DNR is partnering with Iowa State University Extension and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service on the event.

Media Contact: Jason Walker, District Forester, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-228-6611.

Time to start planning to control plants in Iowa ponds

A healthy pond needs aquatic plants, but too many plants can limit the pond's use and cause imbalances in the fish population. If you had problems using your pond last year because of aquatic plant growth, you could have similar problems this year.

In an existing pond, mechanical and chemical control methods are the best options for immediate control. They usually work best if you start early, when plant growth is not at its maximum level. If you wait until growths are thick, control will be difficult, take longer, and chemical control could cause water quality issues that harm fish.

Mechanical methods include bottom blanketing, shading, removal and lowering water levels. Temporarily blanket the bottom of a private pond and leave it in place for 30 days early in the season to limit plant growth in fishing or swimming areas. Use weighted commercial weed barrier products or thick black plastic (punctured to allow gasses to escape).

To shade a pond, apply a pond dye in April, before most plants are actively growing, to reduce the amount of light needed for plants to grow. This works best in ponds with a small watershed. Many blue and black pond dye products are available for pond beautification. Re-apply the product at a reduced rate throughout the spring and summer since inflowing water can dilute it and ultraviolet light can degrade it.

Removal is a low-cost way to take out plants from high-use areas. It can be done by hand or with special rakes and cutters (make your own or buy from retail outlets).

Lowering water levels is another way to control aquatic plants. Let water out of the pond this spring (or winter) to expose aquatic plants to drying (or freezing) conditions to limit their growth after water is allowed to refill the pond.

Herbicides will control pond plants chemically, but you may need to reapply during the summer to get season-long control. Follow these five steps when you apply any herbicide: 1) correctly identify the plant you want to control; 2) measure the area you are going to treat (surface area and average depth); 3) read the herbicide label to determine the correct timing and amount to apply; 4) identify possible restrictions on uses of the water (e.g., irrigation or watering animals) and 5) apply according to label directions. Most aquatic herbicides work best if applied on a calm, sunny morning.

Find more information on aquatic plants in ponds on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/ponds.

Media Contact: Jason Euchner, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-230-4789.

Fishing regulations relaxed at West Swan Lake in Emmet County

ESTHERVILLE - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has relaxed the fishing regulations at West Swan Lake in Emmet County to allow anglers to more freely harvest fish before the lake is renovated to eliminate an overabundant population of bullhead and common carp, and restore water quality and habitat.

DNR fisheries crews removed some adult perch from the lake and stocked them into recently renovated Trumbull Lake, Elk Lake, Little Swan Lake and Diamond Lake.

Anglers with a valid sport fishing license may harvest all sizes and unlimited quantities of any species of fish from West Swan Lake by any means except by use of dynamite, poison, electroshocking devices, or any stupefying substances.

It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters.

The water level will be lowered in early summer to prepare for the renovation project. The DNR will restock the lake after restoration efforts are completed and the lake has refilled.

Media Contacts: Mike Hawkins, Iowa DNR Fisheries Biologist at 712-336-1840 or Chris Subbert, Iowa DNR Law Enforcement Officer at 712-260-1009.

Discounted trees available at distribution events this spring

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), through a partnership with Alliant Energy and the USDA Forest Service, is offering a mixture of hardwoods, low-growing ornamental and evergreen tree species for \$25 each.

Alliant Energy customers can purchase up to two trees to be picked up at the following locations:

- April 30, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Pioneer Ridge Nature Center (1339 US Hwy 63, Bloomfield)
- May 5, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Awaysis Park (1490 E Lakeshore Dr., Storm Lake)

All Iowa residents can purchase up to two trees to be picked up at Harrah's Casino, (1 Harrah's Blvd., Council Bluffs) on May 21 from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Submit an order form, available online at www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Urban-Forestry/Residential-Tree-Programs, to reserve your trees.

Media Contact: Gabriele Edwards, Urban Forestry Program Specialist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-822-1031 or gabriele.edwards@dnr.iowa.gov.

Leave wildlife babies where they belong --- In the wild

It's as predictable as May flowers - from border to border, the Wildlife Baby Season has arrived in Iowa. From now until at least mid-June, DNR field offices across the state will be inundated with hundreds of phone calls and scores of deliveries regarding "orphaned wildlife."

Most calls begin with something like, "We were walking in the park when . . .," or "I looked out my window and saw. . ." In nearly every instance, the scenario ends with something [or several somethings] being rescued from their mother.

During a typical season, the species will range all the way from baby robins and squirrels to spindly-legged white-tailed fawns. At this time of the year it is not at all uncommon for biologists to discover that complete litters of baby raccoons, foxes, or even skunks have mysteriously appeared on their doorsteps.

Why this happens is no real mystery. From fuzzy yellow ducklings to tiny baby bunnies, nothing appears more cute and cuddly than a wildlife baby. But in reality, most of the wildlife reported to DNR field offices is not really orphaned at all. And while the people who attempt to "rescue" these babies have the best of intentions, they are in fact dooming the very creatures they intend to help.

The babies of most wildlife species leave their nests or dens well in advance of being able to care for themselves. Although broods or litters may become widely scattered during this fledgling period, they still remain under the direct care and feeding of their parents.

For many songbirds, the transition to independence comes quickly and may take as little as four or five days. For other species such as Canada geese, kestrels, or great horned owls, the young and parents may stay in contact for weeks -- even months.

At the beginning of the fledgling period, young birds appear clumsy, dull-witted, and vulnerable. The reason for this is because they really are clumsy, dull-witted, and vulnerable. But as the education process continues, the survivors smarten up fast, while

slow learners quickly fade from the scene. Most birds have less than a 20 percent chance of surviving their first year. While this seems unfortunate or cruel, this is a normal occurrence in nature. In the real out-of-doors, it's just the way things are.

Most mammals employ a slightly different strategy when it comes to caring for their adolescents. Since most mammals are largely nocturnal, the mother usually finds a safe daytime hideout for her young while she sleeps or looks for food. Consequently, it is perfectly normal for the young to be alone or unattended during the daylight hours.

Nevertheless, whenever a newborn fawn or a nest full of baby cottontails or raccoons is discovered by a human, it quite often is assumed that the animals are orphaned. The youngster's fate is usually sealed when it is promptly "rescued from the wild."

Many wildlife babies die soon after capture from the stress of being handled, talked to, and placed into the unfamiliar surroundings of a slick sided cardboard box. Should the animal have the misfortune of surviving this trauma, they often succumb more slowly to starvation from improper nourishment, pneumonia, or other human caused sicknesses.

Whether they are adults or young, all species of wildlife have highly specific needs for survival. "Rescuing a baby from its mother" not only shows bad judgment, it also is illegal.

Observing wildlife in its natural habitat is always a unique privilege. Taking a good photo or two provides an even more lasting memory. But once you've done that, let well enough alone. Leave wildlife babies where they belong -- in the wild.

A list of wildlife rehabilitators is available online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/lowas-Wildlife>.

Media Contact: Karen Kinkead, Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-330-8461 or Mick Klemesrud, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-490-5690.

Five boating tips to keep waters clean all season long

Iowa boat owners can help to protect the environment by following five simple tips all summer long.

- Take time to prepare your boat's shrink wrap for recycling by removing vents, strapping or zippers. Only the plastic film can be recycled. Many shrink wrap recycling programs today are offered at the local level, so if your marina does not recycle, ask your county government. Some boaters have found that by carefully removing the wrap it can be reused for a second season.
- If you trailer your boat to different waterways each summer, leave the uninvited aquatic hitchhikers at home by following shrink wrap "Clean, Drain, Dry," ensuring your boat, trailer and motor are cleaned thoroughly (including any tackle or

watersports gear) and allowed to dry completely before splashing in a different body of water.

- The earth may be 71 percent water, but it's no place for trash. Always have a trash receptacle aboard, and when underway ensure nothing goes overboard. (A waste can with a closable lid helps.) A second receptacle for recyclables also helps and makes cleanup easier at the end of the boating day.
- Prevent a spill by refueling your boat with care. Always have an absorbent pad, fuel nozzle absorbent "donut," or "bib" (to soak up back splashes) when you pump. Actively listen to fuel being dispensed into the fuel nozzle receptacle. Slow down the dispensing pump as fuel reaches the top of the tank – usually when you start to hear bubbling or gurgling noises rising from the fuel filler tube. Refuel portable tanks ashore.
- Help keep discarded fishing line and soft baits out of the water by building a fishing line recycling bin and placing it in your community. To learn how, go to BoatUS.org/Monofilament.

Earth Day—Saving the earth one small step at a time

DES MOINES—Figuring out what you can do to help the planet can seem overwhelming.

But there are many ways you can help—at home, in your neighborhood or at your favorite lake, state park or wild area. Wherever you celebrate, our Earth Day page has many ideas.

Some are simple, like educating yourself and your kids by holding a scavenger hunt in the backyard or exploring the woods with all five senses. Others require a little more effort—such as picking up discarded fishing line or trash as you hike a state park. Some can save you money like "9 Ways to Save \$\$\$ and Improve the Air."

So explore the woods and watch spring come to life. Try out some family activities like "A Poet's Hunt," or use your detective skills to find an animal's tracks and figure out where it was going and why. Follow Conservation Officer Erika Billerbeck and kids as they take you on a "Wild Things" trip to an Iowa woodland.

Plant a tree, following DNR foresters' tree planting tips to help it survive and thrive. Check out our blogs to attract pollinators with native flowers or build a rain barrel. See tips for greening up your yard or take the next step and consider planting native turf grasses for the ultimate summer green—low maintenance needs, disease resistant, heat tolerant, soil building and pollinator friendly.

Love state parks? From staying on trails to being vigilant on beaches, learn six ways to show you care. Request a reusable litter bag for use on your outdoor adventures.

Learn where recyclables end up and what happens to wastewater after it goes down the drain. Take advantage of opportunities volunteering.

Busy with spring cleaning? If you're puzzled about disposing of household solvents, pesticides or latex paint, tap into "Bring it in—We all Win," your guide to household hazardous waste and Regional Collection Centers.

Or show your commitment to Iowa's natural resources all year long by buying a habitat stamp or purchasing a Natural Resource license plate. Funds from the stamps and license plates take care of Iowa's wild places and the wildlife that call it home.

Want to stay in the loop year-round? Subscribe to DNR's quarterly magazine Iowa Outdoors—your exploration guide to the latest outdoor news, wildlife photography and hidden treasure spots across Iowa's vast nature landscape.

Take time every day to care for our air, land and water. Our actions help keep Iowa's natural resources healthy and productive for years to come.

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