



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 31, 2022**

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## Fawning season is here, deer are on the move

The calls have been coming in to field offices and conservation officers for the past few weeks and will only increase as the first few weeks of June marks the peak of the deer fawning season.

Callers report finding an “abandoned” fawn in an unusual place, like a flowerbed or small patch of cover. Rest assured this is normal deer behavior.

“The doe searches out an isolated location where she feels safe and on occasion those places are not what we may think of as ideal. She chose that location because it made sense to her,” said Jim Coffey, forest wildlife research biologist with the Iowa DNR. “The worst thing someone can do is to ‘rescue’ the fawn. Mom is likely nearby and watching you. Leave it be or if you did handle the fawn, return it to where you found it and walk away.”

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not be rehabbing or co-mingling fawns with other deer to avoid the potential of spreading chronic wasting disease – or other disease - to new areas.

The spindly legged newborn fawn is designed with a few survival tools built in –its spots are cryptic camouflage that emulates the sunlight spots on the leaf litter on the forest floor and its lack of movement the first two weeks helps to reduce scent patterns. This combination is its best chance at survival until it is able to follow the doe.

After the fawns are born, the doe will return to fairly normal behavior – sleeping, feeding – but returning to nurse and care for the fawn.

The fawning season also coincides with an increase in deer vehicle collisions.

“There is a lot of movement this time of year that is part of the social structure of deer. The doe is on the move looking for the safe isolated place to have the fawns. In addition last year’s fawns – teenagers now – are starting to venture out to find new space. These yearlings have to make their own decisions for the first time, encounter other adult deer and build new social structures,” Coffey said. “This movement behavior can occur during all times of the day. Once it settles out, the active time will return to dawn and dusk.”

Drivers are reminded to drive defensively, avoid distractions, and slow down and not to veer for deer. If they hit a deer, drivers can get a salvage tag by calling either the local conservation officer or local law enforcement. There is no fee for a salvage tag it does require that the entire deer is taken.

**Media Contact:** Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958 or Mick Klemesrud, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-490-5690.

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## Spring turkey season ends on a high note

Despite some challenging weather conditions, Iowa's wild turkey hunters reported harvesting nearly 12,000 birds through the mandatory registration system. While similar to 2021, the 300 additional birds registered represented and overall state increase in harvest of around two percent.

Iowa's spring turkey seasons began April 8 with the youth season and ended on May 15. Hunters purchased nearly 52,500 spring turkey tags.

"We see a great passion for the wild turkey resource here in Iowa," said forest wildlife biologist Jim Coffey, with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "Hunters are always anxious to get into the woods and experience the thunder of the wild turkey gobble."

While the hunting season may be done for 2022, Iowans can help the DNR with its annual turkey production estimates by reporting all the turkeys seen during the months of July and August. This annual survey is designed to predict the overall production of wild turkeys that will be available for the 2023 season.

The DNR will have a link to the survey on its website before it begins on July 1, where Iowans seeing wild turkeys are asked to provide the date and county in which the turkey(s) was seen, if it was an adult female or adult male (males have beards on their breast), and whether there are young poults (baby turkeys) present.

Annual production surveys conducted by the DNR are an important component of the species management plans, which includes providing hunting opportunities. Anyone seeing turkeys is encouraged to participate in this online survey.

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## New fish structure maps added to DNR website

More than 2,000 updated fish structure locations and 215 lake contour maps have been added to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website at [www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Maps](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Maps).

Anglers can download the fish structure locations to their fish finders and GPS units to easily find brush piles, rock reefs and gravel spawning beds. DNR Fisheries staff and partners, such as county conservation staff and fishing clubs, strategically place fish structures in Iowa lakes to attract fish for anglers. Fish hide out in these structures throughout the year.

Since 2013, DNR fisheries staff has collected data on Iowa lakes by using specialized equipment connected to computers aboard a boat. The software records lake depth along with information on what type of material is on the lake bed (sand, gravel, muck) and, if aquatic vegetation is present, the height and density of that vegetation. This data is used to generate more accurate maps for anglers. Each map includes depth contours, boat ramp locations, and other amenities.

Find more information about a specific structure such as GPS coordinates on the interactive [Fishing Atlas](#) or a downloadable GPX fish structure file on the [Fishing Maps webpage](#). These tools are updated each year as new content is available.

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