



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2022

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Southwest Iowa's Lake Icaria offers year-round outdoor recreation



Lake Icaria is an outdoor recreation destination drawing visitors from across Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Corning, Iowa - Lake Icaria is a popular fishing lake in southwest Iowa's Adams County. It's also has a popular campground. And a popular swimming beach, and is popular for boating and for deer hunting. In fact, Lake Icaria offers year-round outdoor recreation attracting visitors from Des Moines to Council Bluffs and all across the region.

"It's quite a destination area for southwest Iowa," said Chad Paup, wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Grand River Unit. "The Adams County Board of Supervisors is investing in the cabins, cottages, beach, and marina because they know that Icaria brings people to the area."

Lake Icaria is a shared resource between the Iowa DNR and the Adams County Conservation Board. Paup's staff is responsible for managing and improving the wildlife area, the Iowa DNR's Fisheries Bureau manages the lake and the conservation board is responsible for the park.

Paup said staff from the Grand River Unit are working to reclaim the area from the cedars and woody shrubs that has crowded out the prairie one chunk at a time. The cut trees are placed in a pile, then they treat the area with prescribed fire. After the cedars are removed, he said they are occasionally finding remnant prairie on some of the areas.

"It's not everywhere, but it is in pockets," he said. "In southern Iowa, if you don't manage these areas with fire, they can get away from you fast. We want native grasses and wildflowers here and that requires active management."

Paup said they rotate the areas where they use fire every 3-5 years, and maintain the firebreaks which makes it more manageable. The area surrounding the east retention pond was burned this spring to get grass on the hillsides, which will improve and protect the water quality of Lake Icaria.

"It's a constant battle to keep trees and shrubs from encroaching on the grassy areas," he said.

The DNR partners with the Adams County Conservation Board, that owns and manages the adjacent Talty Wildlife Area, to coordinate the use of prescribed fire to maximize the benefits.

"They're tremendous partners and go over and beyond helping us to manage Lake Icaria to make this place what it is - they take care of the park, manage the parking lots, boat ramps and we manage the wildlife area," Paup said.

That partnership benefits not only the visitors to the area by providing quality habitat, but also the animals that pass through or call the area home.

Staff with the DNR's Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring program visited Lake Icaria in 2009 and returned this year to record the different species on the area.

In addition to the deer, wild turkeys, rabbits and pheasants that live here, there are a number of species that are considered in need of greatest conservation including northern leopard frogs, western fox snakes, northern prairie skinks, Baltimore orioles, belted kingfishers, brown thrashers, dickcissels, common yellowthroats, red-headed woodpeckers, western meadowlarks and monarch butterflies.

Lake Icaria fishery

Lake Icaria has a two-acre pond on the wildlife area that is used as a temporary home to 100,000 newly hatched walleye fry year in late April to early May where they will live for 30 days eating and growing with little competition and away from predators. At the end of the 30 days, these walleyes will be around two inches long. The stop logs are pulled and the walleyes drain through the tube into the 650-acre lake.

Walleyes are a featured species here and the lake receives a supplemental stocking of larger 8-inch fish in the fall. These advanced fingerlings have the best chance for survival.

“We’re seeing a lot of 12 to 18-inch fish right now, and fish up to 25 inches are being caught in the winter,” said Andy Jansen, fisheries biologist with the Iowa DNR. He said they used the pond this year to rear wipers instead of walleyes to increase the wiper population.

The fishery also includes blue catfish, a recent addition beginning in 2019, that come from the Mt. Ayr fish hatchery. These fish are now around 14 inches and beginning to show up in anglers’ catches. The blue catfish join a strong population of the ever-popular channel catfish.

“There’s an outstanding channel catfish population for all sizes, especially for fish 15 to 25 inches,” Jansen said. “Bluegills are running around 7-8 inches and crappies are mostly 7-9 inches with some larger fish available. It’s a good place for kids because the panfish are active and kids generally don’t care about the size.”

The fishing jetties received new riprap recently and the marina installed new docks and new security lighting last year. Bait is available at the marina and at nearby Lakeside Supplies. A fish cleaning station is available at the main boat ramp.

“The park staff do a fantastic job at maintaining the park and the lake amenities,” Jansen said.

Etcetera

- The cabins and cottages are open all year.
- Archery deer hunting is allowed in the park.
- Lake Icaria is closed to Canada goose hunting.
- Trumpeter swans have been released here, but have not set up residence. They are nesting on ponds in the area.
- Sunflower fields offer dove hunting. The expanding prairie offers pheasant hunting. Shrubby field edges offer quail hunting.

Media Contact: Chad Paup, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-238-5708.

Operation Dry Water starts July 2

DES MOINES - A group of state, federal and local law enforcement agencies will partner to focus enforcement of Iowa's boating while intoxicated law as part of the national Operation Dry Water campaign to draw public attention to the hazards of boating under the influence.

"We will conduct boating while intoxicated focused enforcement statewide with increased patrols, check points, and be administering breath tests and working to inform the public on the hazards involved on the waters across Iowa," said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator and education coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

Operation Dry Water is July 2-4.

"One-third of all boating fatalities nationally involved alcohol and many of those victims were innocent bystanders," she said.

"The effects of alcohol can be intensified when combined with wind and wave action and an extended time spent in the sun. Operators may not think they are under the influence, but their judgment, reaction time, balance and vision indicate that they are," Stocker said.

In 2021, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and its partners contacted more than 1,800 vessels containing 6,254 boaters resulting in 542 citations or warnings as part of Operation Dry Water.

The DNR has partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, and local sheriff's departments as part of previous Operation Dry Water campaigns.

2021 top areas for BWI arrests

- Mississippi River: 8
- Coralville Reservoir: 6
- Missouri River: 3
- Okoboji: 3
- Rathbun Reservoir: 3
- Total BWI: 31

2020 top areas for BWI arrests

- Rathbun Reservoir: 8
- Mississippi River: 6
- Coralville Reservoir: 4
- Okoboji: 2
- Saylorville Reservoir: 2
- Total BWI: 26

2019 top areas for BWI arrests

- Mississippi River: 22
- Coralville Reservoir: 15
- Saylorville Reservoir: 10

- Cedar River: 5
- Lake Manawa: 2
- Total BWI: 66

2018 top areas for BWI arrests:

- Saylorville Reservoir: 9
- Coralville Reservoir: 5
- Lake Manawa: 5
- Okoboji: 5
- Lake Panorama: 4
- Total BWI: 39

2017 top areas for BWI arrests:

- Saylorville Reservoir: 10
- Coralville Reservoir: 5
- Mississippi River: 5
- Okoboji: 5
- Lake Manawa: 3
- Total BWI: 39

Media Contact: Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator and Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-313-6439.

Pheasant hunters bagged 375,000 roosters in 2021, nesting outlook predicts another good hunting season

Survey results confirmed what Iowa pheasant hunters already knew – pheasant hunting last fall was really good. In fact, it was the best in more than a decade. Iowa hunters bagged an estimated 375,000 roosters in 2021, the most since 2008.

“Our small game survey reflected the general reports I received during the season that the northern two-thirds of the state had really good pheasant hunting,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “We had a slight increase in the number of hunters, but a 25 percent increase in the harvest, which tells me that the birds were there and hunters did really well.”

And based on the annual pheasant nesting outlook, the 2022 season could produce similar results.

“Our pheasant population typically shows increases following mild winters with springs that are dryer and warmer than normal,” he said. “This year, the weather model is

predicting pheasant populations to be stable to slightly increasing for the fall 2022 season, with some regional fluctuations.”

Bogenschutz expects quail and pheasant numbers in southern Iowa to rebound somewhat after a string of bad winters, ice and spring floods, but the best pheasant densities will again be in the northern and western regions, he said.

While the nesting outlook weather model offers a population prediction, the annual August roadside survey provides an actual count of pheasants, quail, rabbits and partridge. Results from the annual August roadside survey will be posted online at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey around Sept. 15.

Landowners interested in improving pheasant hunting on their land are encouraged to reach out to staff with the Iowa DNR’s private lands program at www.iowadnr.gov/crp or by going to their local Farm Service Agency office to sign up for continuous CRP.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.

Kirkwood Community College instructor recognized for outstanding fishing program



Ken Carroll, Parks and Natural Resources professor at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, is the 2022 recipient of the Brass Bluegill award from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources *Fish Iowa!* program.

Since 2008, Carroll has been a *Fish Iowa!* trainer, sharing the materials with his students. He includes *Fish Iowa!* in Applications of Natural Resources, a first year, first semester class. He also trains students in *Project WILD* and *Aquatic WILD*, which help them develop interpretive skills and provides content material they will use when they complete the Certified Interpretive Guide Training through the National Association of Interpretation their final semester of the program.

Kirkwood's Parks and Natural Resources students are trained in ecological restoration and interpretive skills to help them secure jobs as naturalists, park rangers, park managers and conservation officers. Many transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

Carroll has trained 450 future conservation professionals in *Fish Iowa!* and the WILD resources. "This pre-service training is invaluable as a resume builder," explains Carroll. "What we thought were soft skills of being able to communicate and lead really were a lot more important than that. These students are exposed to communication and presentation skills, and find strengths to talk about natural resources and practice those skills over and over to make an impression on a prospective employer in an interview or hit the ground running in their careers."

Students are fully immersed in the *Fish Iowa!* teaching module throughout the semester. They learn fishing knots, practice casting, create their own fish to learn about adaptations, and compete in a casting competition. Students often follow up by fishing in ponds on the Kirkwood campus.

One of Ken's students shared, "Ken is the organizer of several clubs on campus and teaches many types of classes, but I personally believe his true passion is teaching *Fish Iowa!*" Another said, "He has inspired generations of college students to get involved in fishing and teaching others."

Carroll will receive his award, along with fishing equipment to use with his classes, at the June 9 Natural Resources Commission Meeting. The Brass Bluegill award has been presented each year since 1996 to an outstanding local program that exemplifies the goals of the *Fish Iowa!* Angler Education program.

Media Contact: Barb Gigar, *Fish Iowa!* coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-494-3891.

Help stop aquatic hitchhikers this Fourth of July

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages all boaters and anglers to check for unwanted hitchhikers on their boats and equipment this Fourth of July to help protect Iowa lakes and streams.

Aquatic invasive species move from one water body to another by hitchhiking on boats, in bait buckets and on other equipment used in the water. They can create serious problems for Iowa waters and negatively impact the quality of outdoor recreation experiences.

“Aquatic invasive species can reduce native species and make lakes and rivers unusable for boaters, anglers and swimmers,” said Kim Bogenschutz, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

These invasive species often grow quickly and spread fast when brought to another lake or stream due to a lack of natural predators or competitors.

“Boaters and anglers can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species to new water bodies by cleaning, draining and drying their boats and equipment after each time on the water,” said Bogenschutz.

- CLEAN any plants, animals, or mud from your boat and equipment before you leave a waterbody.
- DRAIN water from all equipment (motor, live well, bilge, transom well, bait bucket) before you leave a waterbody.
- DRY anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, boots, clothing, dogs). Before you move to another waterbody either: Spray your boat and trailer with hot or high-pressure water; or Dry your boat and equipment for at least five days.
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a water body unless they came out of that waterbody and always empty unwanted bait in the trash.

It is illegal to possess or transport prohibited aquatic invasive species or to transport any aquatic plants on water-related equipment in Iowa. Signs posted at public accesses remind boaters to stop aquatic hitchhikers and identify infested waters.

Iowa law also requires boaters to drain all water from boats and equipment before they leave a water access and to keep drain plugs removed or opened during transport. It is also illegal to introduce any live fish, except for hooked bait, into public waters.

Learn more about aquatic invasive species, including a list of infested waters in the current *Iowa Fishing Regulations* or at www.iowadnr.gov/ais.

Media Contact: Kim Bogenschutz, Fisheries Bureau’s Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-290-0540.

Iowa’s Scholastic Clay Target Program hosts largest youth trap shooting championship in Iowa



Athletes from 117 teams across Iowa converged on the Iowa State Trapshooting Homegrounds, north of Cedar Falls, June 7-12 for the 2022 Scholastic Clay Target Program State Trap Shooting Championship. Nearly 3,000 athletes from 4th grade through high school competed in three different competitions; singles trap, doubles trap, and handicap trap.

The Ankeny Centennial Jaguars were the top Varsity squad in Handicap and Doubles, while the Ankeny Hawks were Varsity Squad Champions in Singles Trap. Individual honors are also awarded by age group for each discipline. A complete list of the results can be found online at: <https://app.sssfonline.com/nationals/3273>.

The All-State team for singles trap is determined by the combination of the athlete's league score and the Championship Event Score. The All-State Teams are below.

Ladies Singles Trap - All State Team

1. Kayla Holschlag, New Hampton High School Trap Team, Captain
2. Brooke O'Connor Ankeny Hawks Shooting Sports
3. Jenna Smith, Mt. Pleasant Trap Team
4. Jaden Rydl, Gilbert Clay Commanders
5. Emma Chapin, Maquoketa Cardinals
6. Lacey Gangwish, Underwood Youth Trap Team

Men's Singles Trap - All State Team

1. Colton Crooks, Charles City High School, Captain
2. Ray Callaway, Central Iowa Straight Shooters
3. Hunter Strong, Davenport Youth Trap
4. Michael Lemburg, Pleasant Valley Trap Team

5. Quinn Glock, Ankeny Hawks Shooting Sports
6. Tyler Resor, Waverly-Shell Rock Trapshooting Team

The Scholastic Clay Target Program is the largest, fastest growing, and most exciting youth clay target program in the US. Student athletes from elementary through high school and college have the opportunity to compete in sports such as trap, skeet, and sporting clays, as well as Olympic disciplines like bunker trap and international skeet.

The SCTP is a youth development program, first and foremost and we do this through the shooting sports and competitive shooting. The SCTP's mission is to help kids reach their highest potential in becoming the best athletes and young adults they can be. For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program in Iowa, contact Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator at 515-313-8048 or chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

Media Contact: Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator, 515-313-8048 or Chris.Vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

State Preserves Advisory Board to meet June 23

The State Preserves Advisory Board of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 1 p.m., June 23, in Wiatt Hall on the Lakeside Laboratory campus, 1838 IA-86, in Milford.

A field trip to Silver Lake Fen, Cayler Prairie, and Freda Haffner Kettlehole state preserves will precede the 1 p.m. business meeting. Meet at the dining hall on the Lakeside Laboratory campus at 8:30 a.m. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The meeting is open to the public. Any person attending the public meeting and has special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments should contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov, and advise of specific needs.

The public can listen to the meeting via Google Meet at meet.google.com/vop-uxye-ysv.

Members of the State Preserves Advisory Board are Rebecca Kauten, Steve Gustafson, Amy Crouch, Rick Cerwick, Perry Thostenson and Barbara Schroeder. The Deputy Director of the DNR is Alex Moon.

The following is the June 23 agenda.

- Approve agenda
- Approve minutes of past meeting
- White Pine Hollow State Preserve - request from Vienna Luxemburg Fire Department for permission to establish waypoint markers
- Behrens Pond & Woodland and Hanging Bog state preserves -request from the Iowa Chapter of the Nature Conservancy to transfer ownership and management to Linn County Conservation Board

- Starr's Cave State Preserve - request from Des Moines County Conservation to remove and farmhouse behind the nature center
- Cayler Prairie State Preserve management plan update
- Elect a new chair.
- Open discussion

A more detailed agenda is available on the Iowa DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/spab.

For more information, contact John Pearson at 515-669-7614.

Iowa's Scholastic Clay Target Program crowns youth sporting clays champions

Athletes from 28 Iowa teams participated in the 2022 Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Sporting Clays Championships held June 17-19, at the New Pioneer Gun Club, in Waukee.

The Ankeny Jaguars Shooting Sports team took home first place in men's Varsity Individual and Varsity Squad in sporting clays, while Nikolle Kussatz from the PC Eagles won the Ladies Varsity Division, and the Pella Shooters Club won the Junior Varsity Squad Division. The complete list of results is available online at <https://app.sssfonline.com/nationals/3273>.

Men's Varsity Individual Sporting Clays

1. Carson Finney, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars
2. Corbin Peck, Des Moines Clay Crushers
3. Will Hinrichs, Des Moines Clay Crushers
4. Quinn Glock, Ankeny Hawks
5. Mitchell Van Zee, PC Eagles
6. Gavin Sosa, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars

Women's Varsity Individual Sporting Clays

1. Nikolle Kussatz, PC Eagles
2. Bailey Oliver, Dallas Center-Grimes Trap Team
3. Jenna Smith, Mt. Pleasant Panthers
4. Haley Starmer, Pella Shooters Club
5. Erin Mathes, Pella Shooters Club
6. Elizabeth Faust, Des Moines Clay Crushers

Sporting Clays Varsity Squads

1. Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Freedom Squad, 482 points
2. Des Moines Clay Crushers, 444 points

3. PC Eagles 4, 441 points
4. Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Victory Squad, 427 points
5. PC Eagles 2, 421 points

Iowa's SCTP teams will attend the last competition of the season on June 23-26 at the New Pioneer Gun Club in Waukee, for the Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program Skeet Championship.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program in Iowa, contact Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator at 515-313-8048 or chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.