



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 26, 2022**

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## Iowa pheasant population survey begins Aug. 1

Iowa pheasant hunters had an excellent season last year, harvesting the most roosters since 2008, and many are looking forward to what 2022 has in store. That fall forecast will be based on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) annual roadside pheasant counts, that begins Aug. 1.

The statewide survey is conducted by Iowa DNR staff between Aug. 1-15, who drive 218, 30-mile routes on gravel roads at dawn on mornings with heavy dew. Hen pheasants will move their broods to the edge of the gravel road to dry off before they begin feeding, which makes them easier to count.

Anecdotally, upland wildlife research biologist Todd Bogenschutz has been receiving reports from across southern and southwest Iowa of quail whistling and rooster pheasant crowing.

"Last year, South-central Iowa had an average count of six pheasants per route, so I'd be surprised if this year's counts aren't higher. The question is, if the counts in the counties in the northern third of the state can go higher, where we had good numbers and good hunting," said Bogenschutz. "It will be interesting to see the survey results. We are dry over a lot of the state and the conditions for the survey are important as the accuracy of the counts depend on the dew conditions when the routes are run."

In June the DNR issued its annual prediction for the roadside counts, which uses a weather model based on the snowfall, rainfall and temperatures from the past winter and spring. The model provides a best guess at what the counts might look like, and it is predicting counts as good to better numbers than last year. And that is good news for hunters as they bagged an estimated 375,000 roosters in 2021.

But the best indicator for the fall season is the August roadside survey that counts actual pheasants seen along more than 6,000 miles of rural, gravel roads.

"I'm cautiously optimistic for this fall," he said. "All the indicators are pointing in the right direction."

The August roadside survey has been conducted over the same routes since 1962. In addition to pheasants and quail, the survey collects data on partridge, cottontails and jackrabbits. Results will be posted online at [www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey](http://www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey) in early September. Iowa's pheasant season begins Oct. 29.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.

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## Grant funds available for communities impacted by the 2020 derecho

The Iowa Legislature appropriated state infrastructure funds to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to be used for a community-based tree planting program for derecho recovery.

A total of \$250,000 in matching funds will be made available to state and local governments, schools and volunteer organizations, and service organizations in the 27 Iowa counties included in the 2020 Governor's Derecho Disaster Proclamation for planting trees.

Additionally, through the USDA Forest Service & National Association of State Foresters (NASF) 2022 State Urban Forest Resilience Grant Program, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Reforestation funds. A total of \$250,000 in matching funds will be made available to the same 27 counties that also suffered losses from EAB.

The Community Forestry Grant Program provides reimbursable grants from \$500 to \$5,000 to be used to purchase and plant trees suitable to Iowa on publicly owned lands. Qualifying public planting lands include, but are not limited to, street right-of-ways, parks, school grounds, courthouse lawns, public buildings, fairgrounds, cemeteries, libraries and trails. Award recipients will be reimbursed up to \$5,000 of derecho recovery grant funds and \$5,000 grant match funds.

The application and rules are available online at [www.iowadnr.gov/urbanforestry](http://www.iowadnr.gov/urbanforestry). Entities may submit multiple proposals. Applications are due by Sept. 1.

**Media Contact:** Janessa Hollmaier, Community Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Trees Forever, 319-826-0814.

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## Martens Lake not open to boat traffic for hunting this fall

Tripoli, Iowa - Waterfowl hunters scouting shallow lakes and marshes ahead of the season should be aware that Martens Lake on the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area is in the process of a dike repair and channel excavation project and will not be open to boat traffic for hunting this fall.

The construction will not impact boat traffic on the rest of the marsh.

“We began dewatering the lake in May and expect the construction phase to begin, weather permitting, by late summer or early fall, with a goal of being completed in March of 2023,” said Jason Auel, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “Martens Lake attracts duck hunters from across the state and we want them to know that the lake will not be an option this fall so they can make alternate plans.”

The project will repair more than two miles of the 70-year-old dike network, improve three miles of in-marsh channels used for boating access, remove sediment to create deep-water areas and fix the water control structure.

“Repairing the dike system will allow us to manage the water level in Martens Lake for the benefit of fish and wildlife, and improve public access,” Auel said.

Hunting on other segments of Sweet Marsh will still be available during the project. The contractor will operate out of the main parking lot, which may be closed to public access during the project.

For more information, call the Cedar-Wapsi Wildlife Unit at 319-882-4252.