



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 11, 2022

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Iowa's pheasant season is expected to be a repeat of 2021



Based on the August roadside survey, Iowa pheasant hunters can expect similar hunting as 2021, when they harvested the most birds in more than a decade. Iowa's pheasant season is Oct. 29-Jan. 10, 2023. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Iowa's 2022 pheasant season is expected to be another good one when more than 60,000 plus blaze orange clad hunters take to the fields on Oct. 29. And based on the results of the August

pheasant survey, hunters can afford to be optimistic.

“Our bird numbers are similar to last year so that should make some folks pretty happy,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “I think we’re set up for a good hunting year for pheasants, especially in northwest, west central and north central regions. Central too. Quail is also looking good in southwest and south-central Iowa.”

The annual August roadside survey found Iowa’s statewide pheasant population to be essentially unchanged from 2021 at slightly under 20 birds per 30-mile route. Iowa’s pheasant counts mirrored what was happening across much of the pheasant belt. North Dakota and Nebraska were essentially status quo – like Iowa, Minnesota was slightly higher and Kansas was down due to the drought. South Dakota doesn’t conduct population surveys.

Based on the survey results, Iowa hunters can expect to harvest 300,000 to 400,000 roosters this year, which is similar to last year, when the harvest was the highest in more than a decade.

The pheasant harvest is heavily dependent on hunter numbers and the past two years had the highest number of pheasant hunters since 2009. An estimated 63,000 hunters participated in 2021, a slight increase over 2020, and based on the number of phone calls Bogenschutz is receiving, the interest from nonresidents continues to rise.

“I’ve gotten calls from hunters in Tennessee, Alabama, Michigan, New York – all interested in coming out to pheasant hunt,” he said.

While bird counts were not as high as the top regions, the pheasant populations have improved in the east central and southeast regions.

Something to note, he said, is that portions of western and northwestern Iowa impacted by the drought were opened to haying CRP and while the haying was not likely as wide spread as last year, it would still be advised for hunters to scout the area they plan to hunt prior to the season.

Iowa Pheasant Season

Iowa’s pheasant season is Oct. 29-Jan. 10, 2023, shooting hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The daily bag limit is three rooster pheasants with a possession limit of 12. Hunters must have a valid hunting license and habitat fee.

Hunters are required to wear at least one article of external clothing with at least 50 percent of its surface area solid blaze orange: hat, cap, vest, coat, jacket, sweatshirt, shirt or coveralls. The same blaze orange rule applies while hunting quail, gray partridge and ruffed grouse.

If hunting on public land that requires nontoxic shot, hunters are encouraged to plan ahead to pick up shells. While the supply isn’t as tight as it was for dove loads, it still isn’t great.

Iowa’s youth enjoy special pheasant season Oct. 22-23

Iowa’s young hunters will get to experience the first cackle and flush of the year during the youth only pheasant season Oct. 22-23, and the 2022 season should be good.

The residents-only youth season gives Iowans age 15 and younger the opportunity to hunt for rooster pheasants without purchasing a license, habitat fee or taking hunter education. Youths must hunt under direct supervision of an adult age 18 or older that has a valid hunting license

and habitat fee. Last year, nearly 6,000 youth participated, harvesting more than 2,500 roosters.

Special youth only seasons allows young hunters an opportunity for success without pressure or competition from other hunters. Only the youth are allowed shoot pheasants and they may bag one rooster per day.

Online Hunting Atlas offers places to go

Iowa hunters have been using the interactive Iowa hunting atlas to find new places to go hunting. The hunting atlas features more than 680,000 acres of public hunting land that is owned by the state, county or federal governments. It's available online at www.iowadnr.gov/hunting.

This tool allows hunters to see which zone the public area is in, type of shot allowed, wildlife likely to be found and get an overhead look at the terrain. The mobile version of the atlas will show hunter location on the area if granted permission.

The atlas view from above allows hunters to zoom in on an area, see how to get there, the lay of the land and where one parcel of public hunting land is in relation to others and print off maps.

Information is updated as public hunting lands are acquired.

The hunting atlas also includes private land enrolled in the Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) where private landowners receive assistance to improve habitat on their land in exchange for opening the property for hunter access.

Site maps are available at www.iowadnr.gov/ihap showing boundaries and which species would be most likely attracted to the habitat. Walk-in public hunting through IHAP is available between September 1 and May 31.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828, or Mick Klemesrud, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-490-5690.

Check docks and equipment for invasive species before storing for the winter

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds lake property owners to check their boat and trailers, and docks and lifts, for aquatic invasive species before storing them for the winter.

Aquatic invasive species, everything from zebra mussels to Eurasian watermilfoil, move from one waterbody 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.

"Fall is a great time for lake property owners to check their boats, docks and lifts for new infestations of aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels," said Kim Bogenschutz, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Iowa DNR. "As you bring each item out of the water,

visually inspect areas that have been submerged for months. Touch smooth surfaces to check for juvenile zebra mussels that feel like sandpaper when you run your hand over a surface they've attached themselves to and are often invisible to the human eye.”

Aquatic invasive species often grow quickly and spread fast when brought to a new lake or stream due to lack of natural controls.

How to Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species

- 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.

Diverse, untamed landscapes make Clear Creek one wild place



Joe-Pye-weed and sneezeweed are visible in the fen portion of the Clear Creek Wildlife Area in northcentral Allamakee County. A fen is a rare type of wetland that supports uncommon plant species including bog birch (shrub), and white turtlehead and grass-of-parnassus. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Golden Ridge Road winds through the valley in scenery-rich Allamakee County, leading to Clear Creek Wildlife Area; a 950-acre public area that is a mix of timbered hills, a fen and a cold-water trout stream that are linked by three connected parcels.

Clear Creek is within the Driftless Area, a region encompassing a portion of southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin and northeast Iowa that was missed by the glacier from the most recent ice age giving it a unique topography.

It's northeast Iowa in a nutshell.

"This is a spot where you can run in to species that you just don't see anywhere else," said Troy Anderson, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Upper Iowa Wildlife Unit, while cautiously navigating the spongy, humpy, soggy, trip-hazard-thick vegetation in the fen.

A fen is a rare wetland community, supporting unique plant species, like bog birch, a shrub found growing in its spongy, humpy, soggy soils.

The thickness of the vegetation prevents more common woody shrubs and trees that like wet soils from taking hold. On this hot, humid early September morning, the fen is dotted by small, delicate white-flowered grass-of-parnassus, the yellows of the sneezeweed, oranges of the jewelweed, purple-flowered great blue lobelia and white turtlehead flowers. The spring fed stream is clear and flowing at high velocity.

"I'm surprised we don't see trout flashing out from the watercress," Anderson said while scanning the edge of the submerged vegetation. The stream bank is lined thick with head-high grasses and forbs making stream access challenging, but not impossible.

Clear Creek's mix of unique and fragile landforms supports unique and fragile wildlife.

The Iowa DNR's Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring team within the Wildlife Diversity Program surveyed Clear Creek in 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2021. During these surveys, the team confirmed the presence of the state threatened Baltimore checkerspot and mulberry wing butterflies; and striped hairstreak and wild indigo duskywing butterflies, and bullsnares, considered state species of special concern.

They also confirmed dozens of species of greatest conservation need, like black-billed cuckoo, cerulean warbler, common yellowthroat, Aphrodite fritillary, black dash and spotted spreadwings. Other species of concern include the roadside skipper, southern flying squirrel, timber rattlesnake, buckbean, yellow-lipped lady's tresses, swamp thistle, sage willow, bog willow, fringed gentian, tall cotton grass, swamp horsetail and American speedwell.

The bluffs on the north end of Clear Creek are home of another unique landform – the goat prairie.

Many of these goat prairies have been overrun by cedar trees or other invaders. Anderson said the Upper Iowa Unit has been slowly reclaiming the prairie by methodically removing the cedars a little at a time, expanding the opening and allowing native species to return. This approach helps avoid exposing the fragile soils to other invasive species. Once the prairie gets a foothold, staff use prescribed fire to keep the cedars and other invasives in check

These newly opened spots are visible from the road and just a short, winded hike up the steep bluff. If exploring the goat prairie, be aware that bluffs in Allamakee County are home to timber rattlesnakes and the exposed rock outcroppings are favorite basking and resting sites.

Walking/controlled sliding down the bluff, a skink – possibly a five-lined skink – with a light blue tipped tail flashed, gone before than the hand could reach for the camera.

Returning to the valley, Anderson drives south, stopping near a stand of young aspens set back from the gravel road.

Ruffed grouse require young forests to survive, so managing the aspens to maintain a young forest is important for this species that has been declining in Iowa.

"These aspens were cut ten years ago and will be cut again in another five to ten years," Anderson said. "Aspens also provide important habitat not only for ruffed grouse, but for woodcock, black billed and yellow billed cuckoos, and other wildlife."

Trout fishing

"Clear Creek is a beautiful three-and-a-half-mile long trout stream," said Michael Siepker, fisheries biologist with the Iowa DNR's Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery. "It's a wild experience. Some anglers like the mowed experience and others prefer it more off the beaten path. Clear Creek is a great place to go to get away from the crowds."

Clear Creek is one of Iowa's cold-water streams where brown trout population is supported by natural reproduction. The stream was stocked with fingerling sized brown trout until 2008, then surveyed in 2012 looking for evidence of natural reproduction, which was confirmed.

Siepker said the stream headwaters were stocked with South Pine Creek strain of brook trout for the past three years and if the stocking takes hold, there is the potential to catch wild brook trout here, too.

As a fishery, he said Clear Creek is often overlooked by its high-profile neighbors - Waterloo Creek and French Creek.

“This is a nice small stream that is overshadowed by the more popular streams, but would be a good place to go over the Fourth of July to avoid the crowds,” he said. “It would also be a good stream to fish in the winter or spring before the vegetation returns.”

As a direct tributary to the Upper Iowa River, the lower stretch of Clear Creek can also attract northern pike looking for cooler water during the heat of late summer.

Media Contact: Troy Anderson, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-379-5725, or Michael Sieper, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-380-3424.

Fall community trout stocking starts October 19

Eighteen lakes across Iowa are gearing up to receive trout this fall. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will release between 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout at each location as part of its cool weather trout program that brings trout to areas that cannot support them during the summer months.

“Grab your neighbors, friends and kids and try trout fishing this fall,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa DNR Fisheries Bureau. “It’s time well spent. The fish are here, easy to catch and good to eat.”

The fall community trout stockings are a great place to take kids to catch their first fish. A small hook with a night crawler or corn under a small bobber or small simple spinners such as a Panther Martin or Mepps is all you need to get in on the fun.

Bringing trout to cities and towns offers a “close to home” option for Iowans who might not travel to northeast Iowa to discover trout fishing. A family friendly event is often paired with the stocking to help anglers have success and fun while fishing.

The popular 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.

2022 Fall Community Trout Stocking Schedule

Oct. 19, [Heritage Pond](#), Dubuque, 3 p.m.

Oct. 19, [North Prairie Lake](#), Cedar Falls, 3 p.m.

Oct. 20, [Moorland Pond](#), Fort Dodge, 1 p.m.

Oct. 20, [Sand Lake](#), Marshalltown, 1 p.m.

Oct. 21, [Liberty Centre Pond](#), North Liberty, 9:30 a.m.

Oct. 21, [Ottumwa Park Pond](#), Ottumwa, 10:30 a.m.

Oct. 22, [Discovery Park](#), Muscatine, 9:30 a.m.

Oct. 22, [East Lake Park Pond](#), Mount Pleasant, 10 a.m.

Oct. 22, [Wilson Lake](#), Fort Madison, 11 a.m.

Oct. 24, [Bacon Creek](#), Sioux City, 1:30 p.m.

Oct. 27, [Lake Petocka](#), Bondurant, Noon

Oct. 27, [Terra Lake](#), Johnston, Noon

Oct. 28, [Triumph Park West](#), Waukee 11:30 a.m.

Oct. 28, [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#), Ames, Noon

Oct. 28, [Big Lake](#), Council Bluffs, 2:30 p.m.

Nov. 5, [Scharnberg Pond](#), Spencer, 12:30 p.m.

Nov. 18, [Prairie Park \(Cedar Bend\)](#), Cedar Rapids, 10 a.m.

Nov. 23, [Blue Pit](#), Mason City, 11 a.m.

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

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, Regional Fisheries Supervisor, Northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

Iowa's Stocker elected chair of National Association of State Boating Law Administrators



Susan Stocker, Iowa DNR. Photo courtesy of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) elected Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator for Iowa, as chair of the organization for the 2022-2023 year during its 63rd Annual Conference, in Manchester, N.H., in September.

Stocker is Iowa's representative to NASBLA and is responsible for being the voice of the state on boating safety matters.

"I am honored to represent the 50 states and six territory members for the upcoming year and look forward to helping to advance cause of recreational boating safety," Stocker said.

Stocker has served as Iowa's Boating Law Administrator since 2009. She graduated from the NASBLA Leadership Academy in 2011, and was elected to the NASBLA Executive Board in 2018. The board is responsible for moving recreational boating safety forward through education, enforcement, training and policy development on a national level – to the benefit of all states and territories.

She succeeds Lieutenant Kenton Turner, Indiana's Boating Law Administrator, as chair. Stocker is the second Iowan elected as the NASBLA chair. Randy Edwards held the position in 2004-2005.

NASBLA is a national nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories.

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

Learn to Hunt program opens registration for women's upland bird hunting workshop and mentored hunt

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is offering a comprehensive program to teach skills needed to hunt upland game. This program is geared towards women 18 years of age and older who have had little to no upland bird hunting experience. The workshop is also an excellent opportunity for women looking to return to the field and build a network of female upland hunters.

The program includes a classroom portion and a field portion. The classroom portion is scheduled for Nov. 18, from 6-8 p.m., at the Olofson Shooting Range, in Polk City. Participants will learn about the proper equipment, places to hunt, safe shooting practices, and how to field dress, butcher and cook pheasants. The event also includes mentored hunts on Nov. 19 and Dec. 10, at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, near Prairie City.

"For women interested in the challenge of upland hunting as a means of sourcing their own protein, this program provides the opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge it takes to do it all yourself," said Jamie Cook, program coordinator with the Iowa DNR.

The cost for the program is \$45. Participants will receive a hat, vest and a Pheasants Forever membership provided by the Northern Polk Pheasants Forever Chapter. Space is limited so early registration is encouraged.

For more information and to begin the registration process, go to <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=dep4qyuab&oeidk=a07ej9evnm1668f8d0b>

The program is provided through a partnership with the Iowa DNR and Pheasants Forever. It is part of a national effort to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters due to the overall decline in hunting and outdoor recreation.

Media Contact: Jamie Cook, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515.350.8091

Governor Reynolds proclaims Wood Products Week to celebrate Iowa forests

DES MOINES – Governor Kim Reynolds signed a proclamation declaring October 17-21 as Wood Products Week.

Wood Products Week, celebrated the third week in October, is a time to showcase the varied uses and products of Iowa's 2.8 million acres of hardwood forests and support the people who carry on the tradition of careful stewardship of these precious natural resources for generations to come.

Iowa's forests are unique, hidden gems in a land of farm fields and grasslands. Some of the most beautiful forests in the Midwest are found in Iowa. Through sustainable management, forests can stay productive and healthy through timber sales and provide wood products like heirloom-worthy furniture, beautiful cabinets and hardwood flooring.

Healthy, growing forests clean our air and water, conserve our soil and energy resources, provide critical wildlife habitat, and make our communities a more pleasant place to live and work.

Goods that come from our forests make our lives easier and more comfortable. They give us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products. Wood products are recyclable, durable and energy efficient.

Iowa forests are a sustainable-working natural resource that provide economic development opportunities for 158,000 private woodland owners. Iowa sawmills provide good paying jobs for about 600 employees in rural areas. Learn more about the economic impact of Iowa's forests on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Wood-Industry-Logging.

Iowa's best grown trees can produce logs that are sold on a worldwide market. Iowa is internationally known for its high-quality black walnut trees. These valuable trees are prized for their use as a veneer. Walnut heartwood has a unique color, allowing it to command much better prices compared to any other tree in the United States.

Celebrate Wood Products Week by learning more about Iowa forests and how you can support wood recycling in your community on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/Forestry.

Media contact: Aron Flickinger, Forestry Program Specialist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-291-2829.

Iowa DNR hiring seasonal water patrol officers

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking applicants to fill the position of seasonal water patrol officer at several lakes and rivers across the state.

These temporary positions are responsible for checking for compliance with Iowa's navigation and fishing regulations, and helping to ensure a safe recreational environment for the public. Water patrol officers also provide assistance and safety education through personal contacts and occasionally participate in educational programs.

"Our seasonal water patrol officers earn real world, hands-on experience that employers' value and these temporary positions are a good step towards beginning a career with the Iowa DNR," said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator/education coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

Seasonal water patrol officers will also complete required administrative duties, such as activity reports, case information narratives, timesheets, citations, and vehicle/vessel usage records as required, and maintain their issued patrol vehicles and/or vessels, safety equipment, gear, and storage facilities.

All applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Must be a United States citizen or be legally authorized to work in the United States
- Minimum Age: 18
- Valid Motor Vehicle Operator's License.
- Submission to and clearance of a thorough background check.
- Ability to work alone, with the public, in a law enforcement capacity, in all conditions, on weekends, and including holidays, nights, and evenings.

For 2023, seasonal water patrol officers will be paid \$14.28 per hour and work a 40-hour work week schedule consisting of Thursday through Monday with days off during the week. The hours are non-traditional and vary based on the activity of the specific lake, river or reservoir. Shifts include day, night and the three summer holidays - Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.

For more information, or to apply for the seasonal water patrol officer position, go to [Seasonal Water Patrol Officer Jobs](#). Applicants may attach a resume/cover letter to the online application. Applications are due by Dec. 15, 2022. This is a temporary non-merit position with the Iowa Department Natural Resources. The State of Iowa is an EEO/AA Employer.