



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

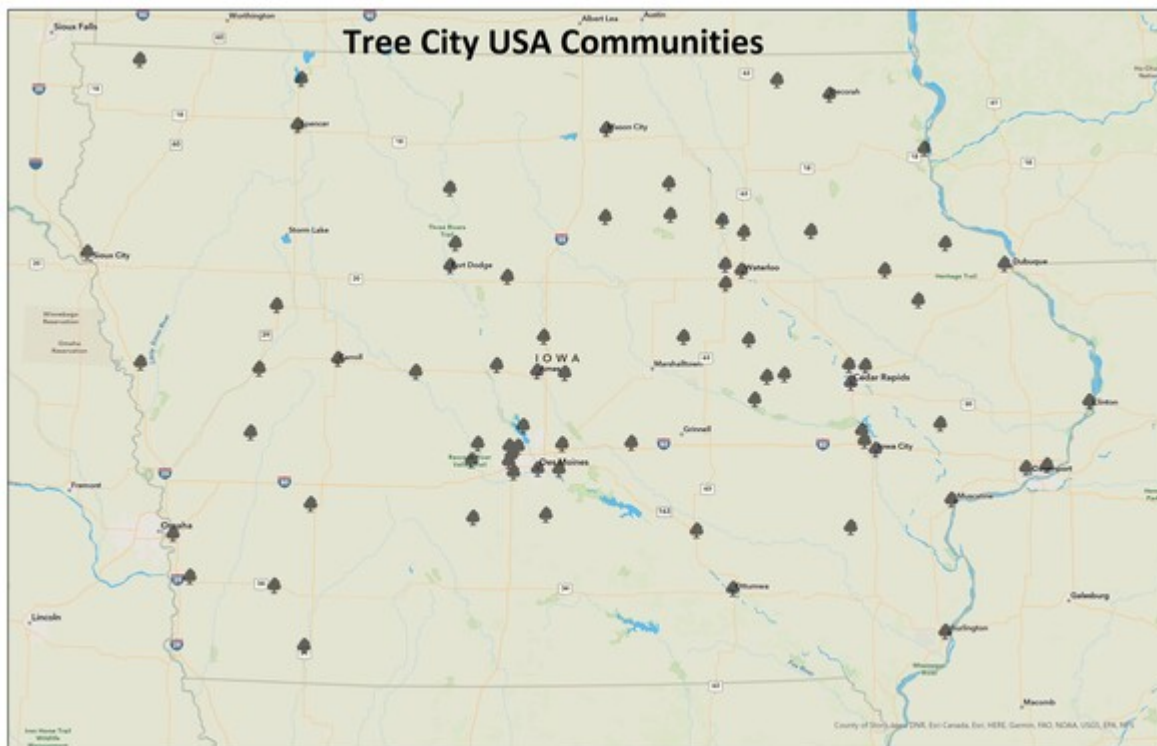
## Conservation and Recreation

For Immediate Release

April 25, 2023

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## Celebrate Iowa trees throughout the year



*Tree City USA communities*

DES MOINES – Every Arbor Day, Iowans pay special attention to the benefits of our trees and dedicate themselves to planting and managing Iowa's trees and forests.

Trees are one of Iowa's most valuable natural resources. They clean our air and water, conserve our soil and energy resources, provide critical wildlife habitat, provide outdoor recreation and make our communities a more pleasant place to live and work.

Iowa's trees and forests are a sustainable-working natural resource that provide economic development opportunities for our 158,000 private woodland owners, 18,000 wood-based industries and over 800 tree care employees.

Here's some fun options to celebrate trees near you throughout the year.

**Plant a Tree** Trees improve the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. They beautify our streets and shade our children. Recent studies show that trees also have a large impact on our mental health, leading to lower levels of stress and anxiety, lowering blood pressure, and helping us to focus and relax. Check out the [How to Plant a Tree from A Container video](#) for tips on how to plant trees properly.

**Identify the Trees Around You** Discover what trees are growing around you. [Iowa's 10 Most Common Urban Trees](#) can help you identify trees in your yard or neighborhood and learn more about each kind of tree.

**Go on a Tree Scavenger Hunt** Get outside and explore all things trees. Use the [Tree Scavenger Hunt activity sheet](#) to guide your adventure.

**Craft a Tree** Add these [tree-inspired crafts](#) to your family or classroom activities. They are fun, easy and use everyday at-home items.

**Read a Book About Trees** Visit your local library and ask for books about trees. Some great titles for young children include: *If I Were a Tree* by Andrea Zimmerman, *Call Me Tree/Llámame Árbol* by Maya Christina Gonzalez, and *The Busy Tree* by Jennifer Ward. Older children might enjoy: *Celebritrees* by Margi Preus, *The Forest Where Ashley Lives* by Mark Vitosh, *Kate, Who Tamed the Wind* by Liz Garton Scanlon, and *The Tree in Me* by Corinna Luyken. Adults might be interested in: *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard, *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, and *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness* by Dr. Qing Li.

**Select local lumber for your home improvement projects** Woodworkers, DIYers and homeowners can find the perfect wood for unique projects at Habitat for ReStores in Des Moines and Iowa City. The lumber is produced from local trees and processed by local sawmills. All income from these lumber sales aides Habitat for Humanity in building and refurbishing homes for in-need families. Learn more about how you can support wood recycling in your community on the [DNR Urban Wood webpage](#).

**Attend an Arbor Day Event** Communities across Iowa will be celebrating Arbor Day with various events including tree plantings, nature walks, and more. Tree City USA Communities across Iowa will host events as well. Attend an Arbor Day event near you.

**Media contact:** Emma Hanigan, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-249-1732.

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## Bird feeding 101 – attracting birds and maintaining feeders

Bird feeding is among the most popular pastimes in the country, enjoyed by an estimated 57 million people who spend roughly \$4 billion annually on seed, baths and feeders, books and binoculars.

Whether attached to decks, hanging in the backyard or off the front porch, Iowans enjoy watching birds come and go from their feeders all year long. Anna Buckardt Thomas, avian ecologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, said beginning bird feeding is easy

and including different types of feeders and a bird bath will increase bird use and species diversity.

“Birds eat different foods and in different ways. For example, woodpeckers attach to trees and approach the food vertically, so suet feeders will attract woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees,” she said. “Tube feeders with black oil sunflower or thistle seeds will attract finches. Platform feeders will bring in blue jays, cardinals, and sparrows that like to eat standing on the platform.”

For do it yourselfers, she said slice an orange or clementine in half and place it in a suet feeder, on a nail or specially designed feeder to attract grosbeaks and orioles in the spring and summer. Soaking raisins or currants overnight (pat dry before placing in a feeder) will attract cedar waxwings, orioles, and gray catbirds. Bluebirds prefer meal worms.

Nectar feeders attract hummingbirds, and the nectar can be made at home by bringing four cups of water to a boil then stirring in one cup of white cane sugar – and only white cane sugar - till dissolved, then allow to cool. Do not add any coloring. Hummingbirds will be attracted to the feeder itself, not the color of the liquid inside. Also consider planting native flowers are a natural hummingbird feeder.

Buckardt Thomas said she rotates the type of food seasonally, with fruits and nectar preferred during the late spring and summer months, and seeds and suet during the colder months, but used by birds all year long.

Other birds, like warblers, don't use the seed but will come for water.

Provide a shallow birdbath set close to the ground, in the shade if possible. Birds will drink from it and splash around in it. Replace the water and clean the birdbath with a 10 percent bleach solution once per week.

Maintaining bird baths and feeders is important to prevent mold and diseases from causing health issues among the feathered visitors.

Clean the feeders once per month with the bleach solution and make sure the feeder is dry before filling with seed. Buckardt Thomas also recommends cleaning the ground underneath the feeders periodically to prevent mold. Nectar feeders should be emptied and cleaned with soap and hot water or the bleach solution every three days or so.

“If you see birds not moving like normal, or see something like conjunctivitis, remove the feeders and wash them and keep them down for at least a week to reduce the spread of any diseases,” she said. “That will help to prevent congregating birds in close proximity and spreading disease.”

### **Hawks and Cats**

Feeders can be hunting grounds for bird eating predators including Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks and housecats.

“It's part of nature but it can be shocking to see a hawk take a bird off the feeder, but if you can, try to enjoy the experience. If it bothers you to have hawks around, you can pull the feeders for a while and they will move on,” Buckardt Thomas said. “Domestic housecats are the number one human related cause of bird deaths in North America, accounting for an estimated 1-3 billion bird deaths each year. The cats are just doing what they are designed to do, but if you plan to attract birds to your yard, make sure the birds are safe, and keep your cats indoors.”

### **Window Collisions**

Birds can't see glass, but see the reflection of the outdoors or of themselves or other birds, often causing them to collide with the window. To help avoid collisions or to minimize the impact, place anti-collision stickers, tapes, or cordson the window, put the feeder either near the window so if they hit it, they won't be going too fast, or far away so they can avoid it.

More information on ways to avoid bird-glass collisions is available on the following websites:

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/DNR-News-Releases/ArticleID/2743/North-America-has-lost-approximately-2-9-billion-birds-since-1970>

<https://www.audubon.org/news/reducing-collisions-glass>

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/why-birds-hit-windows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it/#>

**Media Contact:** Anna Buckardt Thomas, Avian Ecologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-823-3945.

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## It's Back: Sign Up for 2023 Hook n' Paddle Passport

The Hook n' Paddle Passport, launched last summer, has been refreshed and is ready for a second year of fun.

Sign up online and start collecting points for checking in to more than 90 local fishing and paddling locations across Iowa. In-pass mapping makes it easy to find locations near you.

Each check-in from May 1 - Aug. 31, 2023 rewards you with 100 points. Keep building points to redeem for prizes. Redeem your points once you've reached your desired point total.

- 300 points - *Fish Iowa!* water bottle or *Fish Iowa!* hat
- 300 points - one entry into a grand prize sweepstake drawing with a chance to win a grand prize of a kayak, paddle, life jacket and dry bag
- 600 points - dry bag or stocked mini tackle box
- 1000 points - Zebco triggerspin telescoping rod or Zebco 33 spincast dock combo [42-inch rod]

For passport holders who participated in 2022, last summer's passport has expired. The 2023 passport offers the opportunity to start over with all new check-ins between May 1 - August 31, 2023.

Sign up for the Hook n' Paddle Passport and get tips for a fun kayak fishing trip at [www.iowadnr.gov/kayakfishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/kayakfishing).

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## DNR crews achieve walleye collection goals

A dramatic warming trend, along with the correct photoperiod, allowed DNR staff to capture more than 3,100 adult female walleyes in a short amount of time at Clear, Rathbun, and Storm lakes.

Rathbun and Storm lakes began netting operations on April 6, while Clear Lake started gill netting for walleyes on April 9. The last night of netting for these three locations was April 11, but the spawning of fish continued as “green” females ripened in the hatchery.

“The 2023 season for collecting walleye adults for spawning in hatcheries was one for the ages,” said Jay Rudacille, DNR Warm and Coolwater Fish Culture Supervisor. “Mother Nature provided incredible weather for a fast and furious spawning season.”

Along with some walleye adults that stay at the hatchery all year long, netting crews collected enough walleyes to produce 763 quarts at Rathbun Fish Hatchery. Crews at Storm Lake spawned enough females to produce 631 quarts of walleye eggs, while efforts at Clear Lake produced 356 quarts of eggs. The Clear and Storm Lake satellite hatcheries transferred their eggs to the Rathbun and Spirit Lake Fish hatcheries to be incubated and hatched.

By April 13, Storm Lake and Clear Lake stations had already provided over 85 percent of the walleye eggs needed to fill the Spirit Lake Hatchery. Ice did not go off of Big Spirit and East Okoboji lakes until April 12-13. Because of the eggs provided by the satellite hatcheries, only local teams needed to net one day to collect enough muskellunge and walleye broodstock to meet egg quotas for both species. Out of town crews were not called in to assist this season. Hatchery staff believe this is the first time that the satellite stations have provided enough eggs to nearly meet quotas prior to staff netting the local lakes.

“It is hard to fathom that we could nearly reach our egg goal with only having to collect a minimal number of fish from East Okoboji or Spirit lakes, which have been reliable and significant contributors to walleye fry (newly hatched fish) production for many, many years,” said Rudacille.

“Our goal was to collect 1,880 quarts of walleye eggs to produce over 162 million walleye fry that we can stock in Iowa lakes or raise to a larger size in hatcheries before being released,” Rudacille explains. “In total, 1,891 quarts of walleye eggs are being incubated.”

DNR staff had one of the best walleye collection seasons in more than 15 years at Rathbun Lake. “Our walleye population has seen a great resurgence in recent years,” stated Mark Flammang, district fisheries biologist at Rathbun Lake. “Abundant 17- to 28-inch walleyes allowed us to capture more than 1,300 fish (627 females) in just six nights.”

It is typically difficult to catch big fish and lots of them. “We collected an abundance of walleyes with excellent size at Storm Lake this year,” said Ben Wallace, district fisheries biologist. “Storm Lake’s walleye population is stellar right now and will likely remain that way for some time with the protection of the slot limit. If we can get good environmental conditions again in 2024, we should see a repeat next year.”

Three nights of walleye netting at Clear Lake produced its best year since 2015. “We collected 740 female walleye that produced just short of 356 quarts of walleye eggs,” said Scott Grummer, Clear Lake fisheries management biologist. “There are several strong year-classes of walleye in the Clear Lake population. The outlook looks great for future hatchery operations and angling opportunities at Clear Lake.”

Iowa is one of the top producers of walleye fry in the United States, surpassed only by Minnesota in annual production. Hatchery staff will keep a watchful eye over the eggs during the 12-21 day incubation period until they hatch. Walleye fry will be stocked into 31 public bodies of water and 13 watershed rearing ponds. While the majority of Walleyes are stocked as fry, some are cultured in Iowa DNR hatcheries and stocked at different sizes. More than 1.6 million two-inch Walleyes are expected to be stocked into lakes, rivers, and streams across the

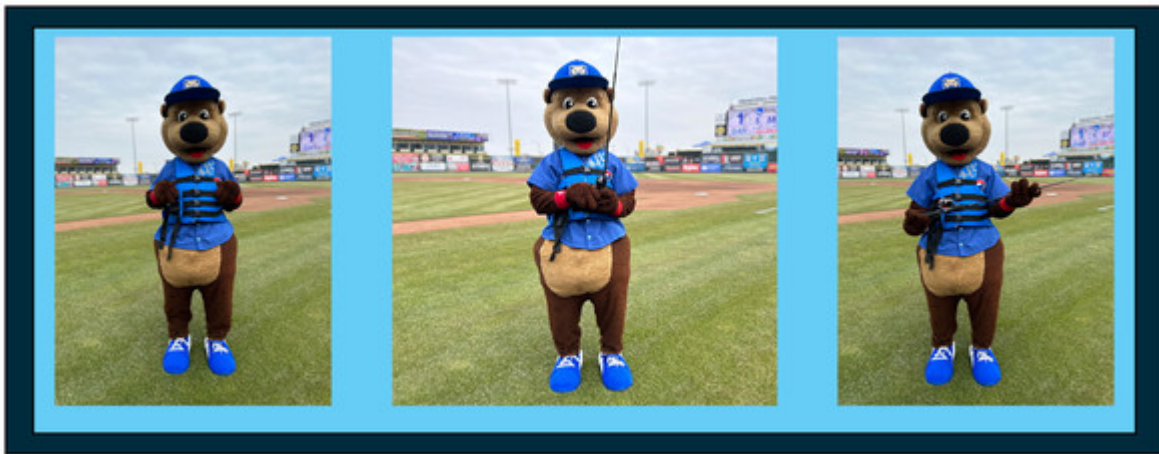
state this summer. Larger 6- 9-inch fingerlings (more than 320,000) will be stocked in lakes later this fall.

With little natural reproduction in most Iowa lakes and rivers, Iowa's Walleye populations rely heavily upon stockings. Walleyes are stocked throughout Iowa into natural lakes, interior rivers, flood control reservoirs and selected larger man-made lakes.

While the sole focus at Rathbun Fish Hatchery in the spring is collecting and producing walleyes, crews at Spirit Lake collect three species of coolwater fish: muskellunge, northern pike and walleyes. DNR personnel collected 257 northern pike that produced more than 2.4 million northern pike fry. A total of 141 Muskellunge were collected, which are currently being held in the hatchery waiting to be spawned.

**Media Contact:** Jay Rudacille, DNR Warm and Coolwater Fish Culture Supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-647-2406.

## Outdoors Day with the Iowa Cubs April 29



Join the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Iowa Cubs, for **Outdoors Day with the Iowa Cubs**, on April 29.

- The first 500 youth through the gates will receive a voucher to claim a youth fishing pole as they leave the park.
- Kids activities are available near the indoor playground, including backyard bass, t-shirt coloring, custom iron-ons and a selfie booth.
- Visit with State Conservation Officers at the Turn in Poachers trailer and race a sailboat.
- All attendees may enter a drawing for the chance to win a lifejacket

Gates open at 2:08 p.m., first pitch is scheduled for 3:08 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 each, and \$4 from the sale of each ticket goes to support the Iowa Hunter Education Association. Go to <https://fevo.me/dnr2023> for ticket information.

Iowa Hunter Education Instructor Association (IHEIA) is committed to supporting organized conservation and outdoor recreation programs and efforts across the state of Iowa. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the primary functions of IHEIA are to provide funding and support to

Iowa's Hunter Education, Fish Iowa, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Outdoor Journey for Girls, Youth Hunter Education Challenge, Field to Fork, Hook and Cook, various youth shooting sports programs and other outdoor skills-based offerings.

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## Annual state auction is live online through May 6

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources annual spring auction is being held online now until May 6. To view the firearms for sale and to register to bid, go to <https://www.auctionsolutionsinc.com/auctions/iowa-state-firearm-and-bow-auction-2023>. Lots begin to close at 10 a.m., on May 6.

Items up for auction include firearms, bows, gun cases and scopes. The items are sold “as is” with no guarantee or warranty. The list of items for sale and the terms of service is available at <https://www.proxibid.com/Auction-Solutions-Inc/Iowa-State-Firearm-and-Bow-Auction-2023/event-catalog/241374>.

Iowans who are winning bidders are required to pick up their firearms on May 20 at the northwest corner parking lot/loading dock of the Wallace State Office Building, 502 East Ninth Street, in Des Moines.

The Iowa DNR reserves the right to reject any bids and withdraw any item from the sale at any time.