



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nov. 14, 2023**

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## Fall trout spawn in full swing

Brilliant fall colors are not only found in trees, but also in streams and the Manchester Fish Hatchery. These underwater splashes of color are signs that trout spawning season is in full swing.

Thanks to an increase in self-sustaining, naturally reproducing brown trout populations throughout Northeast Iowa, there was no need to collect brown trout eggs this fall. In past years, brood trout from the French Creek genetic lineage were collected from French Creek in Allamakee County or Spring Branch Creek in Delaware County, raised at the hatchery then stocked in streams as 2-inch fingerlings.

“Anglers like these ‘wild’ stream-raised fish. They are harder to catch than our hatchery-raised stocked fish,” said Mike Steuck, Iowa DNR fisheries supervisor for interior streams. “Many, if not all, public trout streams have lots of brown trout in them.”

Years of work to protect and enhance the South Pine Creek watershed in Winneshiek County has allowed Iowa’s only native trout to thrive and continue to naturally reproduce in that stream. Eggs are typically taken streamside in late October and early November from wild South Pine Creek brook trout, fertilized and taken back to the Manchester Fish Hatchery to be raised and stocked as 2-inch fingerlings in June.

“With low water levels in most trout streams, we gave the South Pine Creek brook trout a break this fall,” said Steuck. Milt was collected from a self-sustaining population established by stocking fingerlings hatched from eggs collected from South Pine Creek.

“We focused on improving our hatchery techniques with hatchery-raised South Pine Creek female brook trout and wild South Pine Creek brook trout males to expand the numbers of fingerlings available,” explains Steuck.

The rainbow trout spawn, the backbone of Iowa’s trout program, takes up much of December and January. Roughly 750,000 eggs will be collected this season.

Crews check for ripe female broodstock once a week. After a quick sedative bath to calm them, each big trout is held over a plastic bowl, as one of the workers rolls a hand down her belly to force out a stream of orange-golden eggs—up to 4,000 to

6,000 per fish. The milk-white sperm from two males is mixed in. Water is added to activate the eggs and sperm allowing fertilization to occur. The ingredients are gently stirred with a turkey feather to avoid bruising the eggs.

The fertilized eggs are poured into an incubator tray and slid into their place below a stream of 50 to 52-degree water until they hatch. Tiny sac-fry hatch about 30 days after fertilization. Dark clouds of tiny fish grow in raceways at the hatchery. The fish are hand-fed for the first month, then “trained” to eat from automatic feeders.

As the trout develop and grow, they are monitored and transferred to larger tanks, then raceways. The fingerlings will be kept at Manchester or transferred to Iowa's two other stations, near Elkader and Decorah, to be raised for future stocking. In 13 to 15 months, they will be a half-pound and ready to be stocked. Nearly 50 put-and-take streams throughout nine northeast Iowa counties are stocked from April through October and almost 20 community trout fishing locations are stocked through the cold weather months.

“We stock about 370,000 catchable rainbow trout from the hatcheries,” said Steuck. “We also stock about 60,000 brook and rainbow trout fingerlings each year to grow in the streams.”

There's natural spawning, mostly brown trout and some brook trout, in more than 80 northeast Iowa streams thanks to improved habitat and trout genetics, and an extended period of above average annual rainfall prior to the drought these past two years. Many trout caught, though, are spawned under the eyes of hatchery workers at Manchester. These coldwater fish are great fighters and beautiful in their spawning colors this time of year.

Find more information about Iowa trout streams and tips for trout fishing on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/trout](http://www.iowadnr.gov/trout).

**Media Contact:** Mike Steuck, regional fisheries supervisor, northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

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## Banner and Olofson shooting ranges offer discounted annual passes

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has discounted its annual passes for the Banner and Olofson shooting ranges for 2024 by \$40 making it the perfect gift for the hard-to-buy-for member of the family.

From Nov. 25 to Dec. 31, individual passes will be available for \$200 and family passes for \$260, a \$40 savings. Annual passes may be purchased at either range and are valid at both shooting ranges. If you currently have a pass this purchase will just add an additional year to your current pass.

Banner Range, between Indianola and Des Moines on Hwy. 65/69 in Warren County, is a multi-use shooting facility that offers a safe, clean shooting environment for handguns, rifles, archery and shotguns. The range is staffed with professional, certified range safety officers during all operating hours. Banner

Range is open Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Wednesday and Thursday.

The Olofson Shooting Range, located off NW Madrid Dr., about five miles northwest of Polk City, features a classroom, handgun, rifle, trap/skeet and archery ranges. The Olofson Range is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

Shooting ranges welcome shooters of all skill levels and abilities. Patrons have the ability to pay \$10 per hour or purchase an annual pass to cover their shooting time. Information on Iowa shooting ranges is available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Places-to-Hunt-Shoot/Iowa-Shooting-Ranges>

Banner and Olofson shooting ranges are closed Nov. 23 for Thanksgiving along with Dec. 24, 25, and Jan. 1, for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

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## Iowa DNR to host virtual public meeting on Chronic Wasting Disease

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has scheduled a virtual public meeting to update the public on statewide Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance and management efforts.

The meeting is scheduled for Nov. 29, at 7 p.m., and will be hosted on Zoom. Those wishing to attend must register in advance using the link below. To view and listen to the presentation, attendees will need a computer or smart device (e.g., phone, tablet) with a secure internet connection. Attendees can also join by calling in but will only be able to listen to the audio. The recording will be posted to the Iowa DNR's YouTube channel and shared on social media platforms, when available.

To register to attend, visit: <https://bit.ly/IowaDNR-CWD>

As of Nov. 14, a total of 263 wild deer have tested positive for chronic wasting disease in 16 Iowa counties. The DNR has increased disease surveillance efforts during the 2023-2024 deer hunting season in Grundy, Jasper, and Marshall counties where the disease was most recently detected.

"Effective management of this disease requires all hands-on deck," said Dr. Tyler Harms, biometrician with the Iowa DNR. "We are extremely grateful for the partnerships we have with hunters, landowners, and passionate citizens across the state to help monitor for and slow the spread of this disease."

This public meeting is an opportunity for all Iowans to learn more about chronic wasting disease surveillance and management efforts in Iowa, understand ways they can help, and most importantly, ask questions.

"As this disease continues to expand its geographic footprint in Iowa, we encourage all Iowans to stay up-to-date on where we have found CWD so they can make informed consumption decisions," said Dr. Rachel Ruden, state wildlife veterinarian.

Testing for the disease requires a tissue sample from a particular lymph node found just behind the jaw.

Chronic wasting disease is a neurological disease belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. It attacks the brain of infected deer causing the animal to lose weight, display abnormal behavior, lose body functions, and die. It is always fatal to the infected animal and is present in all tissues, including the meat.

To learn more about chronic wasting disease and the DNR's surveillance and management efforts, visit <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Deer-Hunting/Deer-Health/Chronic-Wasting-Disease>

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## Guttenberg south boat ramps close November 27

The Guttenberg south public boat ramps will be closed from Nov. 27 to Dec. 1, for repairs due to extreme low water levels on the Mississippi River.

Extensions will be added to all three ramps to assist with safe launch of boats.

Alternate boat ramps include the DNR ramp below Lock & Dam 10, Turkey River Landing on Pool 11, and a private boat launch at Landing 615 in Guttenberg. Bussey Lake Ramp on Pool 10 remains open.

The project is a joint project between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries and the City of Guttenberg.

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