



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2024

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Show your support for the outdoors while enjoying a day at the ballpark

Join the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Iowa Cubs, for **Outdoors Day with the Iowa Cubs**, on May 10.

- The first 1,000 fans through the gate will receive a dry bag.
- Kids activities near the indoor playground include 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.
- Take advantage of photo opportunities with Smokey the Bear in celebration of his 80th birthday
- Gates open at 6 p.m., first pitch is scheduled for 7:08 p.m.



Tickets are \$11 each, and \$4 from the sale of each ticket goes to support the Iowa Hunter Education Association. Go to <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/iowadnr> for ticket information.

Iowa Hunter Education Instructor Association is committed to supporting organized conservation and outdoor recreation programs and efforts across 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.

Midwest Walleye Challenge prize winners announced

BOONE - Midwest Walleye Challenge participants from across the southern Midwest have submitted their first two weeks of walleye and sauger catches.

Prizes for the longest fish, most water bodies fished, random draws from submitted fish, and hard luck prizes for logging a fishing trip without a catch will be awarded every two weeks until June 30.

The following individuals are first round prize winners.

- Jake Masterson, a Shimano Stradic reel, courtesy of the American Sportfishing Association, for catching the first fish of the competition
- Jacob Tank, for the longest fish, a 25-inch walleye
- Geoff Taylor, for the most water bodies fished, with three
- Stacy Thorson, a random draw cash prize for a submitted catch

The first 100 individuals from each state to submit a catch will receive a \$20 gift card from Discount Tackle. Gift cards are still available for Iowa anglers. Grand prizes and overall prizes will be awarded following the completion of the challenge.

Over the first two weeks, 86 anglers completed 290 fishing trips, with 46 anglers reporting catches of 178 fish. About 36 percent of the first caught have come from the Des Moines River.

“This year’s earlier start should increase walleyes reported from Iowa’s rivers. Catches from lakes and reservoirs will pick up as fish recover from spawning and water temperatures increase,” said Jeff Kopaska, fisheries research biometrician with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “Previous walleye challenges started May 1.”

The Midwest Walleye Challenge is a citizen science data collection effort sponsored by the Iowa DNR and Angler’s Atlas to help improve walleye fishing across Iowa. DNR fisheries biologists use the data entered to assess and manage walleye populations. The MyCatch mobile app maintains anonymous location data, so anglers’ secret spots stay secret.

Anglers can register for the Midwest Walleye Challenge at <https://www.anglersatlas.com/event/767>. Participants can choose the free entry option to qualify for non-cash prizes or pay the \$25 fee to qualify for all prizes including cash payouts.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jeff Kopaska, Fisheries Research Biometrician, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-204-8021.

Thank trees for all they do this Arbor Day

DES MOINES – Get out and enjoy the beauty of April tree blossoms across Iowa neighborhoods.

Trees quietly enhance our daily lives in many ways. They’re like superheroes for our health and our wallets. Neighborhood trees clean the air we breathe and make it fresher. They help keep our houses cooler in the summer and soak up rainwater to help prevent flooding in our neighborhoods.

Being around trees helps us feel less stressed, more focused, and healthier both mentally and physically. Trees make our communities a more pleasant place to live and work.

Here's some fun options to celebrate trees near you this Arbor Day and throughout the year.

- **Plant a Tree.** Check out the [How to Plant a Tree from A Container video](#) for tips on how to plant trees properly.
- **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.
- **Calculate the benefits of planting trees.** It's easy to estimate the value of planting trees on your property with the [i-Tree planting calculator](#).
- **Learn how to prevent wildfires.** Smokey Bear lives within us all! Check out our [easy and fun activities](#) to prevent wildfires when exploring Iowa's great outdoor areas.
- **Explore all things trees.** Use the [Tree Scavenger Hunt activity sheet](#) to guide your outdoor adventures.
- **Read a Book About Trees.** Visit your local library and ask for books about trees.
- **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.

Fishing regulations to be relaxed at Lake Keomah

OSKALOOSA - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will relax the fishing regulations at Lake Keomah starting May 1, to allow anglers to more freely harvest fish before the lake is completely drained as part of a lake restoration project.

"This long-awaited project will help stop shoreline erosion, improve water quality, increase the depth of Lake Keomah, and improve public access and fishing opportunities," said Mark Flammang, area fisheries biologist for the DNR.

Anglers with a valid fishing license may harvest any size or number of largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, channel catfish, and all other fish species from Lake Keomah. Any number of fishing poles or jug fishing is allowed. Anglers must remain in sight of these lines at all times, and follow all other fishing regulations and area rules. Trot lines will be allowed (name and address must be attached); lines may not be set across the entire waterbody. Nets, dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices, or any stupefying substances will not be allowed. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters.

Relaxed fishing regulations for Lake Keomah will remain in effect until the lake is drained. Anglers may fish anywhere within the lake during the normal park hours of 4 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

The DNR will begin lowering the lake water level mid-summer, after the 4th of July weekend. Quality game fish were collected from Lake Keomah in 2023 and relocated to recently renovated lakes across the area.

The fishery renovation is only part of a larger restoration project to improve the lake's water quality. Planned improvements include additional watershed practices to protect the lake, stabilizing the shoreline, dredging in targeted areas, upgrading the boat ramp and trail, improving fish habitat, and expanding public access to the lake.

This project will continue through spring 2026. Park users should expect limited access to Lake Keomah until water levels return to normal. The DNR will restock the lake after restoration efforts are completed and the lake has refilled.

Media Contact: Mark Flammang, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-647-2406.