

Iowa DNR News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DNR shares tips for a safe Fourth of July holiday weekend

DES MOINES, Iowa – As the Fourth of July holiday weekend quickly approaches the forecast predicts very warm weather which will draw thousands of people to state parks, beaches, lakes and rivers.

BEACH & SWIMMING SAFETY:

Wherever you choose to swim this weekend or this summer, whether it's a backyard pool, a pond or lake, or a public pool, please follow these safety tips:

- Keep a close eye on others, especially children. Assign a designated adult to watch over children, and never assume someone else is watching them. Be close enough to touch the child at all times. Even in ankle deep water, the current can be strong enough to sweep you off your feet and out into deeper water.
- Swim with a buddy.
- If you haven't swam in a long-time, refresh your abilities. *All children* should learn to swim with formal lessons.
- Always wear a life jacket. Make sure kids wear their life jackets before getting in the water.
- Avoid alcohol while swimming.
- Stay within the roped in area of the lake.
- Obey posted signs and flags.
- Take a water bottle with you and keep it nearby throughout the day. It's easy to get dehydrated in the sun, particularly if you're active and sweating.
- Note that
 - Iowa's public beaches do not have lifeguards on duty

- Alcohol is prohibited at some public beaches.
- Glass bottles are prohibited on beaches.

Because the beaches are busier this summer, staff encourage visitors to visit during the non-peak times and days. For the busier beaches/parks, the non-peak days are usually Sundays through Thursdays, and Fridays before 5:00 pm. If you plan to go to the beaches on Saturdays, the non-peak hours are usually before noon.

Parks staff may temporarily close parking lots when they become full and limit the number of visitors at that point. The DNR recommends visitors go to another nearby park or beach that is not as heavily populated. Visitors are reminded to only park in designated parking spaces. Violators will be cited by staff.

BOATING SAFETY:

- Plan ahead and avoid peak hours and large crowds of boating.
- Park your vehicles and trailers in designated parking spaces NOT in grass areas or they will be ticketed and towed.
- Alcohol and boating don't mix. Wind, sun glare and heat can enhance the effects of alcohol, hindering the operator's ability to make necessary decisions.
- The same limit of .08 for operating a vehicle under the influence applies to boating.
- Always have a designated operator that avoids consuming alcohol.
- Wear your life jacket, it floats, you don't! Any children 12 and under must wear a lifejacket at all times on a vessel underway in Iowa.
- Every boat or vessel must have a wearable life jacket for everyone on board; a USCG approved throw-able flotation device is also required on vessels 16' or longer.
- Make sure there is a charged fire extinguisher on board, as well as a horn/whistle.
- Slow down and watch for other boaters or personal watercraft, have patience.
- Avoid dams and other hazards on waterways.
- Obey all posted warning signs and rules.
- Drain plugs and other water draining devices must be removed and/or remain open during transport to avoid spreading of invasive species.

STATE PARKS/CAMPGROUNDS SAFETY:

The Fourth of July is one of the busiest times to visit a state park as people enjoy beaches and outdoor activities in the summer sun. Please use these safety tips to ensure an enjoyable time:

- Pack snacks, food, water and personal hygiene products, to bring along for hiking and other recreational activities in the state parks.
- Stay hydrated with plenty of fluids.
- Don't hike alone and always have some way to communicate if you get lost and need help.
- Wear proper outdoor attire for hiking.

- Pack bug spray and sunscreen.
- Slow down on park roadways and obey posted speed limit signs. Families and kids are often walking or biking on the roads.
- If a parking lot becomes full at a park or campground, staff may temporarily close the parking lots and limit the number of visitors at that point. If there is no parking available, do not park in the grass areas, along roadways or any other area that is not a designated parking lot. Violators will be cited.
- If a park is busy, consider visiting a nearby state park that is less populated. Or visit the park during non-peak times, which often include mornings and evenings.
- "Carry In, Carry Out"—please pick up any trash and carry out what you carry into the park. Be respectful and care for our natural resources.
- Don't transport firewood; buy it locally.
- Be respectful of your neighbors camping around you.
- Campers should dispose of trash in receptacles, not burn it in the campfires.
- Check [the DNR website for current alerts and closures](#).
- If you plan to fish, be sure to have a current fishing license. Anyone 16 years and older must have a fishing license to fish Iowa waters. You can purchase one by visiting: GoOutdoorsIowa.com, or by downloading the Go Outdoors Iowa app on your smartphone through the Google Play store or the App Store. You can also purchase your fishing license at some local retailers in your area.

PADDLING SAFETY:

Whether it be tubing, kayaking or canoeing, paddlers are enjoying the splash of the water, scenic views, and wildlife viewing from Iowa's rivers, rapids and streams. Many new paddlers are getting out on the water for the first time this summer. Stay safe each time you paddle with these simple safety tips:

- Always wear your life jacket. Kids 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times. Iowa law requires life jackets on every watercraft, whether it's a motorized boat, jet ski, kayak, canoe, or even a paddleboard.
 - Never paddle rain swollen streams that are at or near flood stage.
 - Paddle with a group, not by yourself.
 - Let others know where you will be paddling, including what access to what access, and when you are expected to return.
 - Know and understand your river levels and flows, as well as the weather forecast.
 - Avoid wading in current off of a river bank, sandbar or access points.
 - Learn about and study your route in advance. Know where your take-out access is located, how many river miles downstream, and how long it is going to take to get there.
 - Check the Iowa [DNR's interactive paddler's map](#) for updates on real-time hazards like downed trees and log jams, strainers and bridge construction. Pay attention to the dam warning signs and know where dams are located before you head out on the water.
 - Bring along a dry bag with a set of extra clothes you can change into if you get wet, a first-aid kit and a protected cell phone or weather radio.
 - Pack plenty of water to stay hydrated. Wear light, loose fitting clothing that dries quickly. Wear a hat, sunglasses and plenty of sunscreen.
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FIREWORKS SAFETY:

Whether attending a display or celebrating in your backyard, keep these safety tips in mind.

- **Fireworks are strictly prohibited in state parks; only sparklers are allowed.**
 - Remember that fireworks can cause serious burns and eye injuries. The Iowa Department of Public Health encourages families to make sure an adult supervises fireworks and keeps young children from playing with or igniting them.
 - Keep fireworks pointed away from you and others when igniting them, and back up quickly after lighting. If fireworks don't ignite or burn fully, don't try to relight them or pick them up. Keep a bucket of water or hose on hand to respond to a fire or mishap.
 - If you have asthma or other lung impairments, be aware of air quality conditions following firework shows, which can temporarily emit smoke and small particulates in the air, impacting breathing.
 - Pick up litter and dispose of any unused fireworks in a safe manner.
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Stay sober and alert on the water this July 4th weekend

DES MOINES - State, federal and local law enforcement agencies encourage all boaters to avoid alcohol and drugs this busy holiday weekend to ensure everyone's safety on Iowa waters.

Operation Dry Water, July 4-6, is a national campaign to reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related incidents and fatalities on the water throughout the year. This effort to deter impaired boating and enforce Iowa's boating while intoxicated (BWI) laws reminds boaters to stay sober and alert, always wear your life jacket, and take a boating safety education course.

"Recognizing that impaired boating is as dangerous as impaired driving is vital," said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator and education coordinator for the Iowa DNR. "Together, we can prevent incidents and save lives."

Alcohol and drugs (legal and illegal) can severely impair a boater's judgment, reaction time and ability to operate a vessel safely. The effects of alcohol, drugs and some medications can be intensified when combined with sun, wind and wave action.

Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in recreational boating fatalities. The risk of serious injury is equal for operators and passengers. Intoxicated passengers can easily slip, fall overboard or suffer other life-threatening incidents.

"One-third of all boating fatalities nationally involved alcohol," explained Stocker. "Many of those victims were innocent bystanders."

In 2023, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and its partners contacted more than 1,487 vessels containing 5,2634 boaters resulting in 531

citations or warnings as part of Operation Dry Water.

The DNR has partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, and local police and sheriff's departments as part of previous Operation Dry Water campaigns.

2023 top areas for BWI arrests

- Okoboji: 5
- Clear Lake: 3
- Saylorville Reservoir: 3
- Coralville Reservoir: 2
- Lake Manawa: 2
- Rathbun Reservoir: 2
- Mississippi River: 2
- Total BWI: 27

2022 top areas for BWI arrests

- Okoboji: 7
- Coralville Reservoir: 6
- Mississippi River: 5
- Missouri River: 5
- Rathbun Reservoir: 5
- Total BWI: 36

2021 top areas for BWI arrests

- Mississippi River: 8
- Coralville Reservoir: 6
- Missouri River: 3
- Okoboji: 3
- Rathbun Reservoir: 3
- Total BWI: 31

2020 top areas for BWI arrests

- Rathbun Reservoir: 8
- Mississippi River: 6
- Coralville Reservoir: 4
- Okoboji: 2
- Saylorville Reservoir: 2
- Total BWI: 26

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

DNR to host Western Iowa deer population meetings in July

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting eight meetings in Western Iowa to discuss the status of the region's deer herd as population levels

have fallen in recent years. The meetings are open to the public.

State wildlife experts say there are likely multiple factors that have contributed to the decline in the number of deer on the landscape and it might take a multilevel approach for the herd to recover.

“With the hindsight we have today, we can look back and realize that too much doe harvest was encouraged for too long in western Iowa. Significant outbreaks of hemorrhagic disease over the last decade have not helped populations recover, and changes in land cover resulting in less habitat makes deer more vulnerable to harvest,” said Jace Elliott, state deer biologist with the Iowa DNR. “This population decline impacts roughly one-fifth of the state so we are encouraging hunters and landowners to come to the meetings and give us their feedback. Every voice counts.”

The goal of these meetings is to move forward with a plan the department can execute and that hunters will support, he said.

Meetings are scheduled in July and run from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

- July 8, Atlantic, at The Venue
- July 9, Denison, at Yellow Smoke Park Lookout Shelter
- July 10, Council Bluffs, at Bass Pro Shops
- July 11, Shenandoah, at the Public Library
- July 15, Onawa, at the Public Library
- July 16, Sioux Center, at Sandy Hollow Clubhouse
- July 17, Sioux City, at Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center
- July 18, Cherokee, at the Community Center Auditorium

“Deer hunting is one of Iowa’s most recreationally and economically important traditions. Our goal is to manage deer numbers at a level that is acceptable to our citizens and that supports a quality hunting experience,” Elliott said.

Media Contact: Jace Elliott, State Deer Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-249-7056.

Help stop aquatic hitchhikers this Fourth of July

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds all boaters and anglers to check for unwanted hitchhikers on their boats and equipment this Fourth of July to help protect Iowa lakes and streams.

Aquatic invasive species move from one water body 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.

“Aquatic invasive species can reduce native species and make lakes and rivers unusable for boaters, anglers and swimmers,” said Kim Bogenschutz, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

These invasive species often grow quickly and spread fast when brought to another lake or stream due to a lack of natural predators or competitors.

Boaters and anglers can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species to new water bodies by cleaning, draining and drying their boats and equipment after each time on the water.

- 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 aquatic invasive species or to transport any aquatic plants on water-related equipment in Iowa. Signs posted at public accesses identify infested waters and remind boaters to stop aquatic hitchhikers.

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 or plants, 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.

Iowans encouraged to report wild turkey sightings in July and August

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for help with its annual wild turkey production survey. During the months of July and August wild turkey sightings are recorded to estimate this year's nesting rates and nest success.

Participation is easy – just note the date and county in which the turkey was seen, if it was an adult female or adult male – males have beards on their breast – and if and how many poults (baby turkeys) were present. The survey is available online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Turkey-Hunting/Wild-Turkey-Survey>. There is a guide on documenting wild turkey broods on the survey webpage, that provides tips on how to determine males from females, and different flock scenarios with poults of different ages.

Annual population surveys conducted by the DNR are an important component of managing the wild turkey. Turkey populations can fluctuate annually across all

regions of the state. All participation is appreciated. To view the 2023 survey results, go to <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Turkey-Hunting> and scroll to the bottom of the page, then click on Wild Turkey Production Survey.

Media Contact: Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958.

DNR seeks public input on state park administrative rule revisions

The DNR is seeking informal comments on administrative rules for Iowa state parks and related programs. Executive Order 10 (EO10), signed by Governor Reynolds on January 10, 2023, requires all state agencies to identify which administrative rule chapters will be retained or rescinded. The EO10 process includes public engagement with the opportunity for meaningful input.

The Iowa DNR has reviewed the following rule chapters relating to programs administered by the Parks Forests and Preserves Bureau: 561 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) Chapters 13 (State Lands Volunteer Program) and 16 (State Park and Recreation Area Fees) and 571 IAC Chapters 36 (Green Valley Lake Special Water Activity Rules), 61 (State Parks, Recreation Areas, And State Forest Camping), 63 (Keg Beer Rules), 64 (Metal Detectors Use in State Areas), 66 (Saylorville Multiuse Trail); and 67 (Development and Management of Recreation Trails on State Forests, Parks, Preserves and Recreation Areas). Based on the review, DNR has revised these chapters to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiency.

The public is invited to provide informal comments on the proposed rule changes. DNR will accept written comments through July 5, 2024. Written comments or questions regarding the proposed rules should be submitted to Kim.Bohlen@dnr.iowa.gov for 561 IAC Chapter 13 and 571 IAC Chapters 36, 66, 67 and to Jessica.Manken@dnr.iowa.gov for 561 IAC Chapter 16 and 571 IAC Chapters 61, 63, and 64. Comments should be made to specific portions of the rules.

After receiving and reviewing informal comments, the DNR will create a draft Regulatory Analysis and draft Notice of Intended Action. The DNR will host a formal public comment period for these drafts, followed by a public hearing, in September 2024.

Versions of the rules, including a “clean” copy and a version showing revisions, can be found on the DNR webpage: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/About-DNR/Administrative-Rules>.

Iowa's Scholastic Clay Target Program skeet championships

342 athletes from 36 Iowa teams participated in the 2024 Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Skeet Championships held June 20-23 at the New Pioneer Gun Club in Waukee.

The Pella Christian Eagles took home 1st place Women's Individual and also the top Varsity Skeet Squad honors, while the Pella Shooters Club took home Men's 1st place Individual. Find a complete list of all results online at <https://app.sssfonline.com/nationals/4148>.

Women's Varsity Individual Skeet

1. Makenna Six, PC Eagles - 197 Points
2. Erin Mathes, Pella Shooters Club - 195 Points
3. Quincy O'Donnell, Underwood Youth Trap Club - 192 Points
4. Megan Vos, Oskaloosa Shooting Team - 192 Points
5. Lacey Gangwish, Underwood Youth Trap Club - 191 Points
6. Jaden Rydl, Gilbert Clay Commanders - 190 Points

Men's Varsity Individual Skeet

1. Trenton Shawler, Pella Shooters Club - 198 points
2. Treyton Vos, PC Eagles - 198 points
3. Robert Curtis, Pleasant Valley - 198 points
4. Colin Van Tilburg, Underwood Youth Trap Club - 197 points
5. Ty Gammon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 197 points
6. Dylan Uitermarkt, PC Eagles - 197 points

Skeet Varsity Squads

1. Pella Christian Eagles (Maroon Squad), 591 points
2. Pella Christian Eagles (Gold Squad), 590 Points
3. Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports, 587 Points
4. Underwood Youth Trap Club, 584 Points
5. Pleasant Valley (White Squad), 570 Points

The Skeet All-State Teams are determined by combining a Senior Division athlete's league and state skeet championship event scores. A total of 350 points is possible.

Ladies Skeet - All-State Team

1. Makenna Six, PC Eagles, Captain - 342 Points
2. Erin Mathes, Pella Shooters Team - 342 Points
3. Jaden Rydl, Gilbert Clay Commanders - 339 Points
4. Quincy O'Donnell, Underwood Youth Trap Team - 339 Points
5. Megan Vos, Oskaloosa Shooting Team - 338 Points
6. Lauren Harmon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 328 Points

Men's Skeet - All State Team

1. Robert Curtis, Pleasant Valley Trap Team, Captain - 348 Points
2. Treyton Vos, PC Eagles - 348 Points
3. Dylan Uitermarkt, PC Eagles - 347 Points
4. Ty Gammon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 347 Points
5. Deacon Boot, PC Eagles - 346 Points
6. Hunter Uitermarkt, PC Eagles - 346 Points

Any Senior Division athlete competing in all three 2024 American Discipline State Championship Events (American Trap 16 yd. Singles, Skeet, and Sporting Clays) is eligible for membership on the High Over-All Team. A total of 600 points is possible.

Ladies High Over-All Championship Team

1. Quincy O'Donnell, Underwood Youth Trap Club, Captain - 538 Points
2. Erin Mathes, Pella Shooters Club - 531 Points
3. Makenna Six, PC Eagles - 525 Points
4. Lily Jennings, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 523 Points
5. Lauren Harmon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 516 Points
6. Megan Vos, Oskaloosa Shooting Team - 510 Points

Men's High Over-All Championship Team

1. Trenton Hol, North Mahaska Shooting Sports, Captain - 570 Points
2. Logan Sease, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 565 Points
3. Hunter Uitermarkt, PC Eagles - 560 Points
4. Ledger Smith, Albia - 557 Points
5. Ty Gammon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 554 Points
6. Owen Playle, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports - 553 Points

Iowa's SCTP teams that participated in the State Championship are eligible to attend the SCTP National Championships held at the Cardinal Center in Marengo, Ohio July 13-20.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target or Action Shooting Programs in Iowa, contact Marty Eby at 515-313-8048 or Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov.

Iowa's Scholastic Action Shooting Program crowns youth rifle & pistol champions

The Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) held the Iowa State Championship match June 22-23, at the Olofson Shooting Range, near Polk City.

The Scholastic Action Shooting Program combines precision and speed as contestants shoot a series of five different targets in four stages for a timed score. Athletes compete with rimfire pistol, rimfire rifle, centerfire pistol, and pistol caliber carbine.

Braelyn Kuro, from Dubuque Scholastic Shooting Sports, was the High Over All Rimfire Pistol shooter with a time of 42.02 seconds. Ethan Pottebaum, from Carroll Action Shooting Sports, won the Men's High Over All Rimfire Pistol with a time of 44.46 seconds to complete all four stages. Michael Hudnut, from Montezuma Shooting Sports Club (SASP), won High Over All Pistol Caliber Carbine with a time of 32.05 seconds, and the 1911 Model with a time of 59.67 seconds.

Braelyn Kuro, from Dubuque Scholastic Shooting Sports, was the High Over All Rifle shooter with a time of 34.22 seconds. The Men's High Over All Rifle competition was won by Alexander Meggers, from the Steel Shooters of Traer, with

a time of 37.12 seconds. Gwen Wical, from Steel Shooters of Traer, was the High Over All Iron Rifle shooter with a time of 39.84 seconds.

Squads from Baxter Shooting Sports, Carroll Action Shooting Sports, Dubuque Scholastic Shooting Sports, Montezuma SASP, and the Steel Shooters of Traer competed in rimfire pistol, rimfire pistol optics, centerfire pistol, centerfire pistol optics, pistol caliber carbine, 1911, iron rifle and optics rifle disciplines. Complete results can be found online at <https://app.sssfonline.com/results>.

“These activities incorporate two key elements - safety and fun,” said Marty Eby, interim shooting sports coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “The Scholastic Action Shooting Program provides an opportunity to learn to safely handle, use, and maintain firearms while learning to compete in these sports.”

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) are youth development programs that promote shooting sports and competitive shooting as a means to help young individuals achieve their highest potential. The program’s goal is to instill personal values and character traits, such as fair play, compassionate understanding, individual responsibility, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and personal commitment in young people.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target or Action Shooting Programs in Iowa, contact Marty Eby at 515-313-8048 or Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov.