

# Iowa DNR News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 1, 2025**

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## Iowa boat registrations expire April 30

Iowans will register more than 220,000 boats before April 30, when current boat registrations expire. Boat registrations are good for three years. Registration fees support boater education and safety, water trails, navigation enforcement and aquatic invasive species.

Boat owners may bring their current registration to any Iowa county recorder's office when they renew. Nonresidents who register their boat in Iowa must go to the county where the boat is primarily used.

Owners who are registering a boat in their own name that they purchased from a private seller should bring the signed registration. Make sure the title is signed over to you, if applicable.

Only boats displaying a current registration decal are allowed to operate on Iowa waters.

Learn more about how to register your boat on the DNR website at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/boating/registration>.

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

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## Discover the renewal of spring with the DNR weekly bloom report

Wildflowers are enticing treasures for wilderness lovers each spring. They sprinkle wild landscapes with color and send subtle fragrances into the nearby air. Get outside this spring and see what you can find.

Find fleeting beauties of spring with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) weekly woodland wildflower bloom report.

Just like the weather, wildflowers can be unpredictable. Visit the [Woodland Wildflower Report webpage](#) for an up-to-date list of wildflowers in bloom each week until mid-May. You can sign up to receive weekly wildflower bloom reports in your inbox.

Early spring wildflowers are commonly called ephemerals, which means "short-lived." Their dazzling show of spring color is only a limited engagement, so take time to see the flowers before they are gone.

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## Annual spring wildlife spotlight survey underway

Staff with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are currently conducting their annual nighttime spring spotlight surveys across the state, collecting information on Iowa's deer and furbearer populations.

The annual survey is conducted from mid-March through April in each county, beginning an hour after sunset, preferably on nights with low wind, high humidity and above freezing temperatures. The routes cover different habitats from river bottoms, to farm fields, prairies, woodlots, pastures and timber stands.

"Keeping the routes and conditions consistent provides more reliable data," said Jace Elliott, state deer biologist with the Iowa DNR.

The 25-mile routes – two per county - are driven below 25 miles per hour with staff shining spotlights out of both sides of the vehicle, recording the number of deer and furbearers seen along with the habitat type, at different points along the way. This is one of the only surveys that provides an index on elusive furbearer species, like badgers and otters. Staff are careful to avoid shining homes and livestock while on the survey and contact the county sheriff ahead of time in case they receive any calls.

"This survey produces really valuable information on our deer and furbearer populations, both locally and at the state level, allowing us to see population trends over time," said Elliott. The survey began in the late 1970s as a way to collect information on the raccoon population, but was expanded to include deer and other furbearers.

"It's an important index that is combined with other data and surveys we use that gives us the most complete picture for these species and guides our management decisions to benefit the resource," Elliott said.

The survey report will be posted later this summer to the Iowa DNR's website at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Population-Harvest-Trends>

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

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## Learn to Hunt program opens registration for Field To Fork Deer Hunting Program

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is offering a six-month workshop to teach skills needed to hunt, field dress and cook white-tailed deer to individuals who have little to no archery hunting experience.

This workshop consists of summer long archery practices, fall workshops and hunting opportunities throughout Iowa's archery season. All sessions are led by instructors that possess the experience to teach skills necessary to become efficient archers and bowhunters.

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

Participants will spend the summer months becoming proficient archers with compound bows provided by Iowa Hunter Education Instructor Association. As summer progresses, they'll also learn basic strategies for hunting deer such as proper equipment, where to hunt, safe shooting practices, and tree stand placement. During the fall, they'll learn how to field dress, clean and cook deer from professional butchers and local chefs.

The course will be hosted in Adel, Ames, Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Onawa and Iowa City, and is geared for participants age 21 and older. Applications will be accepted beginning April 1, for all locations. Once accepted into the program, participants will be invited to register for the course. The course cost is \$200. Applications will be accepted through June 1, or until registration is filled. Space is limited so those interested are encouraged to apply online right away. For more information and to begin the application process visit: 2025 Field to Fork Application: <https://forms.gle/9NR1q78vnugw5BfTA>

The program is provided through a partnership with the Iowa Hunter Ed Instructor Association, Raised at Full Draw, the Iowa Bowhunters Association, Johnson, Linn and Story County Conservation, and other various local partners and archery retailers. 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

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## Get Your Boat Ready for Spring

It is time to get your boat ready for spring. Here are some tips to ensure your boat is safe and running smoothly when boating weather arrives.

1. **Inspect your boat and trailer** - Start at one end and check the entire boat. What is the general condition? Check the trailer tires and vehicle-to-trailer electrical connections, and inspect the winch, winch cable, and tiedowns.
2. **Safety first** - Are the life jackets in good shape and do they still fit everyone? Visually inspect each lifejacket looking for rips or tears and make sure all straps and buckles work properly and are not frayed. How old is the fire extinguisher?
3. **Inspect for minor repairs** - Put in boat plug, attach hoses that were removed, and check for loose connections. Be sure to check for any cracks in hoses. If they are starting to become brittle, replace them before refilling anything.
4. **Check Electronics and Batteries** - Inspect electrical connections to be sure they are clean, tight and corrosion-free. Charge and test your battery to be certain that it will hold a charge using a voltmeter. Clean the battery terminals with a wire brush if needed.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages all boaters to enroll in a boating education course this spring. Traditional and online courses are available. Courses are made to fit every schedule and lifestyle. Find information about course options online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/boating/education-safety>.

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