

***Iowa Outdoors***  
**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**www.iowadnr.com**

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**DNR EXPECTS BUSY WEEKEND FOR PHEASANT HUNTERS**

DES MOINES - Thanksgiving is one of the busiest times for pheasant hunting in Iowa, as family members come home for the holiday. By now, most of the crops are harvested, combine the recent snow fall in many areas with the excellent pheasant numbers in Iowa, and hunters should have some good success.

Rod Slings, recreational safety program supervisor with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, said hunting is a tradition among friends and family, and that tradition can be tarnished by a needless injury.

"Think about who you go hunting with. It's your close friends, your family members. It's people you care about. There is a lot of excitement among pheasant hunters looking forward to this holiday weekend. We want hunters to not let that excitement affect their good judgment when a rooster gets up," he said. "Hunters need to work out their hunting plan, including where everyone in the group will be, where they are going, and when they will return."

Slings said the hunting plan is the most important part of the hunt. Hunters should develop their plan and stick to it.

"We have already investigated 13 pheasant hunting incidents this year, compared to 5 for all of last year. Most have been where a person fired a shot and they either didn't know their companion was in that zone of fire, or they didn't see them," he said. "It is critical to know where your hunting companions are at all times."

Iowa law does not require pheasant hunters to wear blaze orange, but Slings strongly recommends hunters wear as much as possible.

"A solid blaze orange jacket, hat, gloves - the more the better," he said. "After all, the goal for every hunt is to enjoy the day and for everyone to get home safely."

**For more information, contact Slings at 515-281-8652.**

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## **DEER HUNTERS SLOW TO PURCHASE LICENSES**

DES MOINES - Iowa's first shotgun deer season is less than two weeks away and more than 100,000 hunters are expected to purchase their licenses in the next few weeks. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is encouraging deer hunters to purchase their permits soon rather than waiting until the last minute.

"About 75 percent of our deer hunters have not purchased their license yet and I'm afraid there will be a large crowd at our license vendors the day before the season opens and a lot of hunters will be frustrated," said Terry Little, wildlife research supervisor for the DNR.

Shotgun hunters are encouraged to purchase an antlerless-only permit along with their any-deer permit. Thousands of these antlerless-only permits remain in southern and northeast Iowa, where the deer population is high.

"We are hoping the shotgun hunters step up and purchase these remaining antlerless-only permits and harvest a doe while waiting for a chance at a big buck," he said. "We still have antlerless-only permits remaining, but I would advise hunters to buy those permits soon, because they might not be there if they wait too much longer."

The first antlerless-only permit costs \$26. Each antlerless-only permit after the first costs only \$11. Hunters can donate extra deer to a locker participating in the Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) program at no cost. Participating lockers are listed on the internet at [www.iowahush.com](http://www.iowahush.com). Hunters can also donate \$5 to HUSH each time they purchase a deer permit.

The DNR has a breakdown of how many antlerless-only permits remain by county on its website at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com). Click on the wildlife link, then scroll down to Iowa Resident Antlerless Licenses Remaining.

**For more information, contact Alan Foster at 515-281-8874.**

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## **ICE ANGLERS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR TEMPS TO DROP**

DES MOINES - It's the time of year when men and women of all ages are anxiously awaiting the arrival of a longtime friend. Santa? No, winter, and the beginning of ice fishing season.

Ice fishing has a passionate following all across Iowa. Anglers young and old look forward to the water freezing so they can get out to their favorite spot for some comradery and a little fishing. Unfortunately, some try to push the activity and venture out on ice that is unsafe.

"It's getting cold and judging by the weather forecasters it won't be long before the lakes start to freeze, but anglers need to be patient and not take any unnecessary risks," said Rod Slings, recreational safety program supervisor with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The DNR recommends at least 4 inches of ice for general fishing activity. Ice thickness can vary greatly on a body of water and there are a number of factors that affect ice thickness, including moving water, trees or stumps extending through the ice and snow cover. When venturing out, it is best to cut some holes and check the ice thickness as you go.

"Ice fishing is an activity best done among friends. Not only for the social aspect of it, but for safety reasons. If you happen to fall through the ice, someone will be there to help you get out, or who can go for help," Slings said.

There are some items that should be part of every ice anglers bucket, including a life jacket, 50 feet of rope and ice picks for self rescue.

"Those safety items do you no good if you leave them in the truck. Make sure to take them with you out on the ice, because you never know when or where that weak spot will be," Slings said. "I also like to keep an extra pair of warm socks, a blanket, a sweatshirt and other warm clothing in my vehicle, just in case of an emergency."

**For more information, contact Mick Klemesrud at 515-281-8653.**

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