

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653

mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER SPECIAL WALLEYE AND SAUGER REGULATION STILL IN EFFECT IN IOWA

MANCHESTER, Iowa – Walleye anglers have been taking part in an experimental regulation over the past five years with a goal of reducing the high mortality rate of walleye and sauger caught on the Mississippi River during the winter.

The special regulation partially closed winter tail water fishing at three lock and dams and placed a 20-27 inch release slot limit on walleyes from Dubuque south to the Missouri border. This slot limit regulation is intended to keep the egg laying adult walleyes in the population.

Walleye and sauger are popular among Iowa anglers and these fish have been a priority for Iowa DNR creel clerks who collect harvest, size and age data after anglers complete daily fishing trips.

“Our angling public has been more than cooperative during this study. It is their cooperation that provided the quality data that will give us clear guidance as we examine the effectiveness of the experimental regulation,” said Karen Osterkamp, fisheries supervisor for northeast Iowa. “Our goal is to provide the highest quality walleye and sauger fishing on the Mississippi River.”

Although the experimental regulation has expired in Wisconsin waters of the Mississippi River, the rules are still in effect in Iowa waters until the results of a complete five year span are analyzed this May. Iowa DNR fisheries will then coordinate with

Wisconsin and Illinois fisheries biologists and present the results and recommendations at public meetings.

Iowa DNR fisheries researchers are looking at the data to determine whether there has been an improvement in size structure and catch rates of sauger and walleye in the special regulation areas. The data will dictate if the regulation is continued, expanded or changed.

“We do not want to have regulations that are not improving the fishery, so the data will be important in deciding the future of this special walleye sauger regulation, or if it would be applied to any other pools,” Osterkamp said.

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, fisheries research biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-872-4976.

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STATE FOREST NURSERY TO PLANT 150 MILLIONTH SEEDLING APRIL 25

AMES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ State Forest Nursery will plant its 150 millionth seedling on April 25, and the public is invited to an open house to celebrate the event.

The open house is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2404 South Duff Ave., in Ames, and will feature seminars on tree selection and planting, riparian buffers, insects and disease, wildlife problems and habitat, and woody biomass and fast growing selections. Each seminar will last 20 to 30 minutes and be offered once in the morning and once in the afternoon during the open house.

The ceremonial 150 millionth seedling will be planted by Gene Hertel, who was the first trained nursery manager and later became State Forester. There will also be a walking tour of the nursery and seedling beds. A free lunch is available and each person who comes to the open house may take home a free seedling.

“Our hope is that people who come would buy a seedling packet to plant for Earth Week and Arbor Week,” said Roger Jacob, manager for the State Forest Nursery. Wildlife packets are available for purchase for the backyard [\$20] and for the acreage [\$90].

The State Forest Nursery has been providing conservation seedlings to Iowa landowners since the 1930s when it was part of Iowa State University. The nursery was transferred to the Iowa Conservation Commission in 1942.

Since 1942, no other seedling has sold as well as black walnut. “It’s the most valuable for lumber for all sorts of uses and it grows all over Iowa,” said Jacob. The oaks seedlings are a close second.

Production at the State Forest Nursery has changed over the years to meet what was required by Iowans.

“In the early years, it was almost all conifer production because the thought was in order to restore the old crop fields, farmers had to occasionally plant them with

conifers so the fields could recover from all the crop production. But since fertilizers became so popular, the practice has changed,” Jacob said.

Over the last five years, seedling sales have been declining from 5-1/2 million down to 1-1/2 million.

The open house is sponsored by Iowa Tree Farm Committee, Iowa Wood Industry Association, Nina Upchurch Studio, Kiernan Construction, Hickory Park and Van Wall John Deere. No state funds were used for the open house.

For more information, contact Roger Jacob, manager, State Forest Nursery, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-233-1161.

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1.3 Million Servings of Venison

IOWA DEER HUNTERS SHARE HARVEST WITH NEEDY

DES MOINES – Iowa deer hunters donated more than 7,300 deer to the needy by the close of the 2008-09 deer season through the cooperative Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) program. Venison from those deer amounted to 320,000 pounds, or about 1.3 million quarter-pound servings.

Last season was the sixth year in which hunters could leave field-dressed deer at nearly 90 lockers around the state. It brought the total to about 32,500 donated deer, or 6.2 million servings of venison.

A \$1 fee on all deer licenses is collected by the Iowa DNR to pay the lockers \$65 per deer in processing costs. The Food Bank of Iowa coordinates distribution of venison to pantries and missions, and it administers payments to lockers, all for \$5 per deer.

HUSH coordinator Ross Harrison of the DNR said deer donation is a “win-win-win” effort. “Hunters get to shoot more deer, which helps the DNR achieve its management goal to reduce deer numbers. Our less fortunate citizens are provided with one of the healthiest sources of red meat, and Iowa lockers are given more business to help them through struggling times,” he said.

The number of donated deer was down about 10 percent from a year earlier, partly due to declining deer numbers, but also because more hunters kept venison due to their own economic concerns, Harrison said.

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FOUR PRAIRIE RESCUE EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 18

Volunteers of all ages will help “rescue” prairie during April and May. Prairie Rescue volunteers will clear invasive species such as brush and small trees from the sites. Experts will conduct controlled burns on some of the prairies.

On April 18, four sites will host events: Neil Smith NWR, Prairie City; Dorothy Peacut Nature Center, Sioux City; Hartley Heritage Fen, Mitchellville; and Cedar Bottoms Wildlife Management Area, Muscatine.

This is an annual event coordinated by the Iowa DNR with support from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, county conservation boards and private conservation groups.

For a complete listing of all Iowa Prairie Rescue sites, visit the Prairie Rescue website at <http://www.inhf.org/prairierescue2009.htm>. The events are also listed on the Iowa DNR Keepers of the Land events calendar at www.iowadnr.com/volunteer/index.html.

Questions may be directed to Whitney Davis of the Iowa DNR, at 515-281-6271, or Whitney.Davis@dnr.iowa.gov.

Today, only about 1/1,000th of Iowa's prairie remains. These small prairie remnants, even those in public ownership, are still at risk from encroaching species and the lack of historic fire and grazing patterns.

These efforts will allow adults and children to experience prairie while preserving this endangered ecosystem for future generations.

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FOOD PLOTS FOR PHEASANTS PROVIDE NEEDED SHELTER

BOONE – Each winter, food plots of corn, sorghum, or other grains are used by all kinds of wildlife to help them survive. Well-designed food plots also provide important cover and additional food to help pheasant, quail, and other wildlife survive, especially during a period of heavy snow.

“There have been few documented cases of pheasants actually starving to death in Iowa,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist with the Iowa DNR. “Virtually all of Iowa's winter mortality is attributed to severe winter storms with the birds freezing to death.” With next winter in mind, now is the time to begin planning food plots.

So why plant food plots for pheasants if they seldom starve in winter? First, food plots provide winter habitat as well as food. In fact, if properly designed and large enough, the habitat created by a food plot is much more beneficial to wildlife than the food itself. Second, food plots allow pheasants to obtain a meal quickly thereby limiting their exposure to predators and maximizing their energy reserves.

“If hens have good fat supplies coming out of the winter, they are more likely to nest successfully,” said Bogenschutz. Food plots also provide habitat and food for many other species like deer, turkey, partridge, squirrels, and songbirds.

Bogenschutz offers the following suggestions for planning food plots for pheasants:

- Corn and sorghum grains provide the most reliable food source throughout the winter as they resist lodging in heavy snows. Pheasants prefer corn to sorghum,

although sorghum provides better winter habitat. Sorghum is also less attractive to deer.

- Place food plots away from tall deciduous trees, that provide raptors with a place sit and watch food plots, and next to wetlands, CRP fields, and multi-row shrub-conifer shelterbelts that provide good winter habitat.
- The size of food plots depends upon where they are placed. If the plot is next to good winter cover, the smaller (2-acres minimum) it can be. If winter cover is marginal, like a ditch, then plots must be larger (5 to 10 acres) to provide cover as well as food.
- Depending on the amount of use some food plots can be left for 2 years. The weedy growth that follows in the second year provides excellent nesting, brood rearing, and winter habitat for pheasants and other upland wildlife. Food plots that have heavy deer use generally need to be replanted every year.

Cost-share assistance or seed to establish the food plot is available from most county Pheasants Forever chapters or local co-ops. Contact the local Iowa DNR wildlife biologist for information on how to establish and design food plots that benefit wildlife.

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YOUTH HUNTER EDUCATION CHALLENGE ACCEPTING REGISTRATIONS FOR JUNE CAMP

MADRID, Iowa – The Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) combines competition, education and fun for kids ages 12 to 18, at the 4-H Education and Natural Resources Center, in Madrid. The YHEC is set for June 5 to 7, and registrations are due May 1. Participants, coaches and volunteers are encouraged to register soon as the event fills quickly.

Youth from all over Iowa compete as part of a team in four shooting events and four non-shooting events. The events are all held on Saturday and include the Hunter Responsibility Exam; the Hunter Safety Trail Challenge that simulates hunting and includes the ‘dos and don’ts’ of firearm safety and shoot/don’t shoot situations; the Hunting Shotgun Challenge, including shooting at clay and/or life-size targets.

Other events include the Light Hunting Rifle Challenge; the Hunting/Wildlife Identification Challenge to identify animals, tracks, or wildlife signs without an identification book; the Hunting Orienteering Skills Challenge covering map and compass skills; the Hunting Muzzleloader Challenge taking shots at life-sized targets at varying distances and positions; and the Hunting Archery Challenge requiring shots at life-size game targets.

Each event is scored. Teams compete against each other in each event and for the overall competition. Hunter education instructors are encouraged to put a team together and coach their participants.

Youths may register as a five member team or as an individual who will be placed with a team. All participants must compete in all events. To participate, the youth must have passed a hunter education course and be a resident of Iowa.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the eight events that take place on Saturday. Volunteers should contact Donise Grygierczyk at 515.205.8709 prior to May 1. Volunteers, businesses, and organizations may donate money to the event to reduce the cost for participants. All donors of \$250 or more are recognized on the official YHEC t-shirt.

Iowa YHEC is co-sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa State University Extension Wildlife Programs and the Iowa 4-H Safety and Education in Shooting Sports program.

For more information, visit the YHEC homepage at www.iowadnr.gov/law/yhec/index.html or contact Donise Grygierczyk at 515-205-8709.

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Media Contact: Willie Suchy, Supervisor, Wildlife Research Section, Iowa DNR, 515-281-8660.

DNR TO HOST PUBLIC MEETING APRIL 29 ON PROPOSED WILDLIFE RULES

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a public meeting to discuss a number of new proposed regulations including changes to deer, waterfowl, and turkey hunting seasons and some changes to the trapping seasons. The meeting will be conducted over the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) on April 29, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

“This is an opportunity for our hunters and people who support wildlife to give us some feedback on these regulations,” said Dale Garner, chief of the DNR’s wildlife bureau. “We will go over the proposed regulations and seasons and our rationale behind each change, and take comments from anyone willing to speak, then, if there is any time remaining, we will open the discussion to other topics.”

The proposed changes include reducing the number of fall turkey hunting licenses that will be available, changing the counties that will be open for the November and January antlerless deer seasons and changing when the antlerless licenses for these seasons will go on sale. Other topics include proposed waterfowl season dates and restrictions on placing traps in roadways before the trapping season begins.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on the proposed changes on or before April 29, 2009. Persons who wish to convey their views orally should contact the Wildlife Bureau at (515)281-5034 or at the Wildlife Bureau offices on the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building. Written comments may be sent to the Wildlife Bureau Chief, Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; or faxed to (515) 281-6794.

The DNR will have staff members from the wildlife bureau at each site to answer questions, and to take any written comments.

ICN Locations:

Ames	Ames High School, 20 th and Ridgewood
Calmar	Northeast Iowa Community College, Dairy Education Center, 1527 Hwy. 150 South
Centerville	Centerville High School, 600 CHS Drive
Clinton	Graphic Arts Technology Center of Iowa, 1951 Manufacturing Drive
Council Bluffs	Abraham Lincoln High School, 1205 Bonham Avenue
Creston	Creston High School, 601 West Townline Road
Dubuque	Dubuque Senior High School, 1800 Clarke Drive
Fort Dodge	St. Edmund High School, 501 N. 22 nd Street
Iowa City	Iowa City High School, 1900 Morningside Drive
Johnston	Johnston High School, 6501 NW 62 nd Avenue
Marion	Marion Public Library, 1095 6 th Avenue
Marshalltown	Marshalltown High School, 1602 S. 2 nd Avenue
Mason City	North Iowa Area Community College – 4, 500 College Drive
Ottumwa	Ottumwa High School, 501 E. 2 nd
Sheldon	Northwest Iowa Area Community College, 603 W Park St.
Sioux City	Central Campus Individual Learning Center, 1121 Jackson Street
Spencer	Spencer High School, 800 East 3 rd Street
Waterloo	Hawkeye Community College – 1, 1501 E. Orange Road
West Burlington	Southeastern Community College – 1, 1500 West Agency

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