

# *Iowa Outdoors*

*Iowa Department of Natural Resources*

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**Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653**

[mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov)

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**June 30, 2009**

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## **EXPECT BUSY STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS AND BOAT RAMPS THIS WEEKEND**

Iowa’s State Parks and the Fourth of July are as much of a tradition as hot dogs, apple pie and the annual parade.

“Our campgrounds are already busy in fact we have some parks where the first come sites filled two weekends ago,” said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources State Parks Bureau. “We are encouraging all of our campers to be aware of the noise level at their campsites and to have patience at the shower houses and dump stations because of the busy holiday.”

The DNR will be handing out large green reusable litter bags for campers to use to collect trash. The bags contain information on how campers can have a smaller impact on Mother Nature while enjoying Iowa’s scenic beauty. The DNR worked in cooperation with Keep Iowa Beautiful to sponsor the bags.

Boaters who use state park boat ramps will find ramps busy and parking lots filled to capacity. Patience will also be at a premium there.

“Delays at boat ramps can cause frustration among boaters who are in a hurry to get out on the water and enjoy the holiday. Boaters should plan to arrive early at the ramp, use the rigging lane to prepare to launch and to be courteous to the others waiting to put in,” said Susan Stocker, boating education coordinator for the DNR. “Boaters can

reduce the chance of frustration by checking the boat for life jackets, a sounding device, checking the lights and fuel supply before heading to the lake. They should also reduce their speed and watch out for others on the water.”

Stocker said each boat should have a designated operator or to have a plan to rotate operators to reduce the amount of sun and wave action on one operator.

“The key to the plan is to have an operator who is not drinking alcohol,” she said.

Iowans heading to the lake this weekend should be sure to include a rod and reel. Fishing in Iowa lakes and streams is expected to be good.

“After a lot of rain and hot and cool temperatures, we are finally in a stable weather pattern and that should provide our anglers with good fishing,” said Mike McGhee, with the DNR’s Fisheries Bureau. “Look for largemouth bass and channel catfish close to shore. Bluegills should be willing to bite all over the lake and close to shore first thing in the morning.”

### **SIDEBAR: Dos and Don’ts for the July 4 Holiday**

Do bring plenty of sunscreen and bug repellent

Don’t bring fireworks

Do bring balls, bats and gloves for kids to play with

Don’t bring in firewood from out of state

Do plan to spend extra time setting up the campsite

Do plan to arrive early to allow plenty of time to set up

Do call ahead if you do not have a campsite to see if there are any cancellations or first come first serve sites available

Do be courteous of other campers and follow the quiet hours. It takes only one loud campsite to ruin the experience for a lot of campers

Do pick up after yourself

Don’t leave your lights on all night or the air conditioner running while no one is in the camper

Do follow the park rules and plan to have a fun and safe holiday weekend

Do wear a life jacket

Don’t drink and drive while operating a boat

Don’t operate the boat faster than the conditions allow

Do check all boating safety equipment before leaving home

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## **WATER ALLOWED TO TEMPORARILY RETURN TO LAKE DARLING**

BRIGHTON - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is going to temporarily suspend construction on the lake improvement project at Lake Darling in order to complete additional necessary archeological requirements for the project. While the

archeological work is being conducted, the lake will be allowed to refill through Labor Day, and beach and boating activities to resume. There will be no fish in the lake.

After Labor Day weekend, the Lake Darling will be de-watered again, and the work will resume next spring or summer.

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## **MORE THAN 15,000 FISH KILLED IN BUCK CREEK**

GARNAVILLO – The fisheries biologist with the DNR’s Decorah Trout Hatchery estimated more than 15,272 fish, including 532 rainbow trout, were killed in a 7.5 mile stretch of Buck Creek, near Garnavillo, last week.

The DNR received a call on June 27 from a citizen who saw fish dying in the stream on the morning of June 26. The area received a heavy rainfall on June 25.

When rainfall washes across the land, street or parking lot, it can collect anything left on the landscape, like lawn fertilizer, lawn clippings, fuel or oil leaked from vehicles and manure applied to a field. Once in a stream, the material can reduce the amount of oxygen available to aquatic life and cause a fish kill.

Other fish killed during the pollution event include suckers, darters, stonerollers and various minnows. The fish are valued at \$11,752.46.

The incident remains under investigation.

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### **[Electronic photos available upon request]**

An Original Victim Of DDT Pesticide Contamination, Peregrine Falcons Vanished From Historic Mississippi River Nesting Cliffs During The 1960s. Wild Peregrines Are At Last Returning To Iowa. They Have Been Removed From The Federal Endangered Species List They Helped To Create, And Are Now Scheduled For Removal From Iowa’s List Of Endangered Species. For Iowa Wildlife Enthusiasts It Is

## **A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

DES MOINES---Nearly a half century in the making, it was an outdoor celebration that no wildlife enthusiast would want to miss. The event took place last Wednesday as an official contingency of Native Americans, state legislators, state and federal wildlife biologists, environmentalists, falconers, and an extremely diverse group of folks who simply referred to themselves as “hawk heads and wild bird enthusiasts” gathered on the East Lawn of the Iowa State Capitol Building to commemorate the remarkable recovery of the peregrine falcon and to celebrate a proposal to remove the bird from the state’s list of endangered species.

No Hollywood screen writer could have scripted it better. Within minutes of when event speakers were scheduled to take the stage, the four young falcons that have been reared on a ledge immediately above the Capitol steps, decided the time was ripe for stealing the show. Under the anxious eye of their parents, the fledglings took to the air one by one. And although one youngster was forced to make a rather awkward landing in a nearby pine tree, none of the four ended up on the ground. With the first test flights successfully under their belts, the young peregrines couldn't resist doing a series of repeat performances. The maneuvers did not go unnoticed by the binocular packing audience.

"I can see that many of you are looking up into the sky behind me," joked Senator Dick Dearden, who chairs the state's Senate Natural Resources Committee.

"That's all right," said Dearden, as he turned from the podium to view the birds for himself. "The falcons are a lot more interesting than anything I'll have to say and are the real reason we're gathered here."

DNR Wildlife Diversity spokesman, Pat Schlarbaum agreed that the aerial performance was indeed spectacular.

"The skies are no longer silent," proclaimed Schlarbaum. "The peregrine falcon is back in Iowa."

Schlarbaum also noted that Wednesday's gathering was nothing short of a "significant historic event".

"We've been able to maintain at least 10 active peregrine pairs every year since 2004. This year we have a total of 13 nesting territories in Iowa. So far, we've documented a total of 24 young this summer and there are three nests yet to go," said Schlarbaum. "As top of the food chain predators, peregrines have never darkened the skies and the current numbers of nesting falcons are at historic levels and continuing to grow."

"This hasn't happened by accident, and there are a lot of partners who deserve credit," added Schlarbaum. "Iowa falconers [hunters who pursue wild game with trained raptors] have had a very strong interest in this project and played a key role through fund raising, securing captive bred baby peregrines, and then caring for the released birds as they learned to hunt for themselves."

"It's all paid off and the number of falcons currently nesting on artificial sites such as industrial smoke stacks, bridges, and urban structures such as the Capitol Building, far exceeds our wildest dreams," said Schlarbaum. "But the best news is that peregrine falcons are returning to the Mississippi River cliff ledges of their ancestors. I think that the real success story is on those historic cliffs."

Representatives of the Ho Chunk Nation agreed.

"Our people have strong ties to the [Mississippi River] blufflands, and the eagle and the falcon are an important part of our culture," noted Bill Payer, a Ho Chunk Tribal Elder, from Black River Falls, Wisconsin. "Seeing the falcons return is a good thing."

"We have known about the Iowa peregrine work for 15 years now, and this recovery is very important to us," added Ho Chunk member, Pam Snowball.

"The birds are important to our culture. Bringing the falcon back is a good way for us to walk. It makes our hearts good," said Snowball.

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## **STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**

As the Fourth of July approaches, the Iowa DNR is reminding boaters and anglers to take a minute and check for any unwanted hitchhikers and protect Iowa lakes and streams.

Zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil are two aquatic invasive species that have spread across Iowa by hitchhiking on boats, in bait buckets, and with other equipment used in the water. Bighead and silver carp are two other aquatic invasive species that have been spreading on their own throughout Iowa rivers. Last year's flooding helped these carp species swim around dams that otherwise blocked their movement.

A new state record 79 pound 4 ounce bighead carp was caught last week from the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids. Even though anglers enjoy catching these large fish, all aquatic invaders can create serious problems when they become established in our waters.

"Public action is the key to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species," said Kim Bogenschutz, DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator. "Boaters and anglers can unintentionally transport aquatic hitchhikers if they do not take the proper precautions to prevent their spread - inspect, clean, drain."

**Inspect** your boat, trailer, and equipment and **clean** them of any visible plants, animals, or mud before leaving a water body.

**Drain** water from the live well, bilge, transom, motor, and bait buckets before leaving a water body.

**Clean** and **dry** boats, trailers, and equipment. Before transporting to another water body either:

Spray/wash your boat, trailer and equipment with high-pressure and/or hot water; or Dry your boat and equipment for at least 5 days.

**Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash. Never release plants, fish, or animals into a water body unless they came out of that water body.

It is illegal to possess or transport prohibited aquatic invasive species in Iowa. The fine for violating this law is \$500. Signs are posted at public accesses to remind boaters to stop aquatic hitchhikers and to identify infested waters. More information about aquatic invasive species and a list of infested waters can be found in the 2009 Iowa Fishing Regulations booklet.

**For more information contact Kim Bogenschutz, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator, at 515-432-2823.**

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## **DES MOINES RIVER WATER TRAIL IN WEBSTER COUNTY OPENS JULY 10**

The Webster County Conservation Board is hosting a clean-up on the Des Moines River followed by the official dedication of the Des Moines River Water Trail on Friday July 10. Meet at Loomis Park Boat House at 9 a.m. for the cleanup and 12 p.m. for the dedication. Lunch will follow. Loomis Park Boat House is located in Fort Dodge off N 7<sup>th</sup> Street. For more information call Webster County Conservation: 515-576-4258.

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## **IOWA LAUNCHES HUNTEREXAM.COM'S INTERACTIVE HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE** **New hunter education course allows students to complete coursework online before attending Field Day training session**

DES MOINES – Iowa is the latest state to adopt the HunterExam.com interactive hunter education course as an option to prepare for hunting certification. The new HunterExam online course allows students to complete coursework online before attending required classroom and hands-on field course training needed to obtain their Iowa hunter education certificate.

The interactive online coursework allows participants to complete a number of the required course sections and hours at home. “Students can register for free and our customized exam center will keep track of their progress as they move through the Iowa Course. Students appreciate the chance to login and out at any time, and pick up right where they left off,” said Kerry Moher, vice president of HunterExam.com.

With an emphasis on safety and responsibility, the HunterExam.com program focuses on reducing hunting incidents through coursework presented in a narrative fashion with more than 350 original illustrations, 30 interactive exercises (powered by HE Tools™), followed by review questions and discussion points. Students also have access to HunterExam.com’s industry exclusive toll-free customer service help line from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, as well as its live online chat customer service feature.

Megan Wisecup, Hunter Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, emphasizes that “instructor-led Field Days remain a crucial part of the HunterExam process but the online course is a convenient way for students to complete the required course sections and chapter quizzes at home so more hands-on training can be conducted at the Field Day.”

HunterExam.com also offers the only treestand safety course based on the latest guidelines developed by the Treestand Manufacturers Association. This new, fully interactive, narrative course effectively engages students and is only 15 minutes long. The treestand safety course is free to anyone with an Internet connection at [www.hunterexam.com/treestandsafety](http://www.hunterexam.com/treestandsafety).

Students may visit [HunterExam.com](http://HunterExam.com) to view the site free of charge. The online course costs \$24.95 to complete and to receive a Field Day voucher. The student must then successfully complete the Field Day in order to obtain their Iowa hunter education certificate. For more information visit [www.hunterexam.com/usa/Iowa](http://www.hunterexam.com/usa/Iowa).

**Media Contact: Donise Grygierczyk, Iowa Department of Natural Resources at (515) 281-7828.**

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## **NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET JULY 9 AT LAKE DARLING STATE PARK**

BRIGHTON – The Natural Resource Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 8:30 a.m., July 9, at the lodge in Lake Darling State Park, 111 Lake Darling Road, in Brighton.

Commission and DNR staff will meet at 1 p.m., July 8, at the state park lodge for a presentation, a tour of the area, followed by dinner in Washington. The tour and the meeting are open to the public.

Members of the commission are Kim Francisco, Elizabeth Garst, Carol Kramer, Gregory Drees, Janelle Rettig, William Bird and Tammi Kircher. The Director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

The following is the agenda for the July meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of June 11 Meeting
- Director's Remarks
- Honey Creek Resort State Park Update
- Construction Projects
  - Bellevue State park, Jackson County – Dyas and Nelson Units Water System Upgrade
  - Riverton Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Fremont County – Dike Repair
  - Lake Icaria, Adams County – Repair Spillway and Jetties
  - Small Construction Projects
  - Agreement with the City of Dubuque for EB Lyons Center
- Land Acquisition Projects
  - Hendrickson Marsh, Story County – Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
  - Yellow River State Forest, Allamakee County – R. Neale Downing
  - Lake Darling State Park, Washington County – Silt Basin Easements
- Land Management Projects
  - Management Agreement, Lee County – Turkey Run Access
  - Management Agreement, Carroll County – Hazelbrush WMA
  - Management Agreement, Clayton County – Pony Hollow Trail
  - Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 88, Fishing Tournaments

- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 81, Fishing Regulations
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 94, Nonresident Deer Hunting
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 98, Wild Turkey Spring Hunting
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 99, Wild Turkey Fall Hunting by Residents
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 106, Deer Hunting by Residents
- Parks Commercial Concession Contract
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, Aug. 13, Cerro Gordo County

**For more information, contact Melissa Speed, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-281-8650.**

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