



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION | WWW.IOWADNR.GOV/NEWS/

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GREENE COUNTY IOWA IS CENTER OF MULTI STATE POACHING CASE

JEFFERSON, Iowa – What began from a chance encounter on trespassing complaint two years ago led to an investigation that has ended with 18 people from six states pleading guilty to illegal taking or possession of whitetail deer, no valid deer tag, illegal use of a deer tag, illegal transportation of a deer and providing false information to a peace officer. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources filed 48 state charges that included fines of \$7,845 and \$85,000 in liquidated damages for 12 illegally taken deer over a four year period in Greene County, Iowa.

Those charged include Daryl Thompson, 52, of Grand Junction, Iowa, Eric Poindexter, 32, Eufaula, Okla., David Miller, 42, of McAlester, Okla., Richard Densmore, 57, Wetumka, Okla., Marvin Autrey, 41, Wagoner, Okla., Anthony Bernhardt, 47, McAlester, Okla., Garrett Patterson, 27, McAlester, Okla., John Keys, 28, Stillwater, Okla., Andrew Oquist, 33, Knoxville, Ark., Randal Hurst, 43, Altus, Ark., Ricky Hurst, 48, Altus, Ark., Erick Hurst, 22, Altus, Ark., Steven Stubblefield, 43, Springfield, Tenn., Bryan Entrikin, 33, Ashland City, Tenn., Timmy

Sanford, 29, Springfield, Tenn., Scott Keys, 38, Bossier City, La., Kenneth Gabriel, 59, Butler, Mo., and Tamara Kiner, 46, Grand Junction, Iowa.

The individuals forfeited 19 bows and accessories, 9 tree stands with ladders, 6 mounted deer heads, 5 skull capped deer racks, 1 ground blind, 1 rifle and 1 shotgun. The individuals are in the process of paying their fines and restitution.

The case arose during an unrelated poaching investigation in 2008 when Iowa DNR Conservation Officer Dan Pauley recalled a trespassing report where he had spoke with Daryl Thompson, of Grand Junction. Pauley received additional information from local residents about deer poaching and guiding activity in Greene County over the past few years that lead him back to Thompson.

In 2009, a nonresident who had pleaded guilty to poaching deer, provided information on other poaching activity that lead Pauley to other nonresidents who had similar experiences in Greene County.

This information and an analysis of license buying patterns sent Pauley and Iowa Conservation Officer Nathan Hauptert to fellow game wardens in Oklahoma and Missouri.

The web started to build and would eventually include poachers in Iowa, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Louisiana and Tennessee.

“We interviewed a lot of people on the case and each interview would lead us to more individuals who were involved which would lead to more charges. Most of these interviews were done either over the phone with the suspects or by a game warden from the suspect’s home state. There were days when I would be on the phone for 10 or 12 hours,” said Pauley. “There are likely more deer out there than we know about, but we got them on what we could.”

Thompson likely met some of the individuals through business contacts he made while working out of state, and would line up the land and set up deer stands. Until 2007, many individuals would buy doe tags for use as a reason for them to be deer hunting in the woods while they waited for a trophy buck. The poached deer would not be tagged or reported. The Iowa DNR stopped selling nonresident archery doe tags in 2008.

Pauley said there is no evidence that Thompson profited financially from the arrangement.

Pauley, along with fellow officer Hauptert, the Greene County Attorney’s Office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lead the six month investigation. Officers from Oklahoma, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Iowa assisted in the case.

Iowans Charged with Illegal Pursuing of Bear in Arkansas

It seems like poaching turnabout is fair play.

Officials in Arkansas filed charges against Justin Thompson, 22, Grand Junction, Iowa, for hunting bear out of season and without a license. The Iowa officers assisted with that investigation. Scott Kiner, 48, from Grand Junction, Iowa, was charged with aiding and abetting hunting bear out of season. A juvenile from Iowa was issued a written warning.

LICENSE SUSPENSIONS

The DNR issues a license suspension based on a point system with the more points accumulated, the longer the suspension with a maximum suspension of three years. The court added years to the suspension for some of these individuals.

Iowa is part of the Wildlife Violator Compact, which is an agreement between participating states that prohibits a person whose hunting or fishing privileges are suspended one state from participating in those activities in other states. Once their suspension is served, they may again purchase the privileges in other compact states.

Member states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The following suspensions of hunting privileges were a result of the case.

Hunting Privilege Suspension

Daryl Thompson, 8 years suspended: 3 years DNR suspension, additional 5 years court order

Ricky Hurst, 5 years suspension: 3 years DNR and 2 years court order

Erick Hurst, 5 years suspension: 3 years DNR and 2 years court order

David Miller, 4 years suspended: 2 years DNR and 2 years court order

Anthony Bernhardt, 4 years suspended: 2 years DNR and 2 years court order

Andrew Oquist, 4 years suspension: 2 years DNR and 2 years court order

Randal Hurst, 4 years suspension: 2 years DNR and 2 years court order

Eric Poindexter, 3 years suspended: 1 year DNR, 2 years court order

Marvin Autrey, 3 years suspended: 1 year DNR and 2 years court order

Richard Densmore, 2 years DNR suspended

Garrett Patterson, 2 years court order suspension

Steven Stubblefield, 1 year DNR suspension

Bryan Entrikin, 1 year DNR suspension

John Keys, no license suspension

Timmy Sanford, no license suspension

Scott Keys, no license suspension

Kenneth Gabriel, no license suspension

Tamara Kiner, no license suspension

Media contact: Dan Pauley, Conservation Officer, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-370-0422.

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IOWA PHEASANT NUMBERS HOLD STEADY

BOONE – The culmination of more than 200, 30-mile routes driven over the same gravel roads found that Iowa’s pheasant population, on average, is about the same as in 2008. The DNR’s Annual August Roadside Survey statewide pheasant average is 15.5 birds per 30 mile route.

“Based on this year’s statewide index, Iowa pheasant hunters should harvest about 300,000 to 350,000 roosters this fall,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “There will be local pockets of good hunting in each region except for possibly northeast Iowa where the winter and spring weather has really decimated the pheasant population.”

The higher pheasant counts came from the northwest quarter of Iowa as well as central Iowa. The southern third and the east central part of Iowa had significant increases in pheasant numbers, but still averaged 10 birds or less per route.

Hunter surveys conducted in the spring show that most pheasant hunters do not spend many days in the field after the first two weeks of the season. For those hunters who do, there should be plenty of birds available

“There will be quality pheasant hunting this year where there is quality pheasant habitat. While the counts are below what we want and what our pheasant hunters want, as long as Iowa has well managed CRP habitat the populations will bounce back,” Bogenschutz said.

The amount of that well managed CRP land has been on the decline. Over the last two years, CRP contracts covering more than 400 square miles have expired. According to the USDA, CRP contracts on another 170 square miles will expire on Sept. 30.

Over the next four months, the DNR will be meeting with legislators and others with an interest in pheasant and quail to develop strategies to help recover Iowa’s upland bird populations. The committee will present its findings to the Iowa Legislature next spring.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823.

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CLARINDA MAN GUILTY IN BOBCAT CASE

CLARINDA – A Clarinda man has pleaded guilty to two counts of unlawful possession/transportation of bobcat kittens and animal neglect.

Richard Leo Muff, Sr., 59, paid fines totaling \$700 plus costs for taking two young bobcats from the wild. In addition to the fines, Muff was ordered to pay \$400 in liquidated damages on the bobcats and to pay restitution to a wildlife rehabilitator.

When DNR conservation officers seized the kittens at Muff's residence in August, the teeth and claws of both animals had been filed down. The kittens are with a wildlife rehabilitator now having sustained massive bruising and swelling to their mouths from the filing. Both kits also sustained nerve damage to their canine and incisor teeth.

Muff was already under suspension for hunting violations that occurred in the fall of 2008 when the bobcats were seized from his residence last month. His hunting and furharvesting privileges have been suspended until March 2012 and he is not to be present when hunting and furharvesting activities are occurring.

For more information, contact DNR Conservation Officer Deb Smith at 712-250-0507.

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[Electronic photos available upon request]

MASTERS OF DECEPTION

WORLD'S DEADLIEST DUCK DECOY

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

As Iowa waterfowlers anxiously prepare for this year's duck opener, there is one type of decoy that hunters won't be allowed to take into the field. In fact, of all the waterfowl decoys ever devised, it's the only one that has proven so completely effective that its use has been outlawed in every state, province, and territory in North America. That deadliest of decoys is the live English call duck.

Loud mouths of the waterfowl world, English callers are pint-sized descendants of the wild mallard. Developed during the late 1800s in Europe, call ducks have but one purpose --- to make noise and plenty of it. Birds failing to make repeated, high volume attempts at luring wild ducks to within shooting range of their masters quickly found their own way to the hunter's stewpot.

But were live decoys really as effective as legend would claim? Old Time duck hunters who actually used the birds tell the story best. One of those bygone waterfowlers was Clear Lake's, Fred Quant. An early duck hunting mentor to my father, Quant was already too old to go afield by the time we first met. But I loved to hear Fred's stories and, as a curious 7-year-old, was totally fascinated with the boisterous flock of live callers he still maintained in a backyard coop.

According to Quant, old time call ducks were like fine bird dogs --- They simply loved doing what they were bred to do. A good English caller would talk to just about anything in

the sky, he recalled. Passing flocks blackbirds, snipe, you name it. Anything with wings would trigger an immediate greeting. But most of all, live decoys loved the sight of other ducks. The closer wild flocks approached, the louder and more excited the clamor became.

Quant's methods were similar to those used by many Iowa hunters. After tossing out his spread of wooden decoys, a single live hen would be tethered to a nearby stake. The duck would begin calling as soon as wild birds were sighted. If the weather was unusually cold, live callers would receive periodic breaks. They knew the game well and eagerly looked forward to recess.

As break time arrived, Quant would carefully row his duck boat into the decoys and extend an oar to the weary bird. The call duck would quickly step onto the paddle. Once the oar was swung back over the gunwale, the bird would jump down and snuggle into the warmth of a small, straw filled compartment located below decks. A replacement caller would be secured, and the hunt would resume.

During the era of muzzleloading black powder shotguns, the skies above timber sheltered backwaters would often become completely obscured by the sulfurous white smoke of fire belching double barrels. Following a flurry of gunfire, the smoke could become so thick that retreating ducks were sometimes lost from view. Undaunted, the live callers would continue their noisy chatter. Upon hearing the siren song, departing flocks of mallards would often turn about and actually fly back through the cloud of smoke in an attempt to rejoin the decoys. Today, it is hard to determine whether this amazing phenomena was simply a stark testament to the live caller's deadly ability, or if it merely portrays how extremely plentiful and naive wild ducks once were.

Waterfowl enthusiast, George VanWyngarden had equally interesting accounts of his days afield with live callers. When we first met during the early 1970s, VanWyngarden still kept a flock of twenty or so callers at his Manson home.

"Of course, they're just pets these days," VanWyngarden explained. "But looking back, I think the call ducks added as much enjoyment to an outing as any other part of the hunt.

"They just seemed to bubble over with excitement, and their enthusiasm was contagious. We often used several ducks at a time, and they kind of fed off the excitement of the others," he added.

But even the best callers weren't necessarily perfect. Sometimes, especially during mild autumn weather, the ducks would develop a bit of a lazy streak.

"If wild ducks suddenly appeared and the callers didn't respond as quickly as we thought they should, we would pull out our duck calls and blow a couple of notes. Usually, that's all it would take to get the live decoys going," he chuckled.

In 1935, the use of all live decoys --- including the beloved English callers --- was forever banned. With hunters suddenly forced to rely on their own calling skills, the ban led to rapid improvements in the manufacture of commercial wooden duck calls.

"By today's standards, our old duck calls were really junk," recalled VanWyngarden. "They were just something we carried to wake up the call ducks. About half of the time, our calls were so clogged with pipe tobacco and weed seeds that they wouldn't even blow. When

the live decoys were outlawed, people began to take duck calls more seriously. That's when the quality really began to improve."

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FALL MEANS ACTION ON THE WATER

While Labor Day weekend may signal the unofficial beginning of the end of summer fun, for anglers, it marks the start of arguably some of the year's best fishing.

As cooler nighttime temperatures settle in, water temperatures follow suit, sending a message to fish that it's time to get ready for winter. That means eating more, and eating more often. Fish tend to get more active throughout the day, and settle into patterns more closely associated with spring. That often spells fast action and more fish in the bucket.

"Fall fishing ranks second only to spring spawn fishing—a very close second," says Joe Larscheid, chief of the DNR Fisheries Bureau. "We are already hearing field reports of cooler water temperatures and fish moving in shallower to feed. Anglers are reporting good catches of panfish and bass close to shore at many of our lakes, and walleyes, northern pike and catfish are also getting more active"

If fish in the creel isn't solely what your after, fall fishing provides other benefits other seasons just can't offer.

"I actually enjoy it more because the weather is more stable, the smells and sights of fall are spectacular," Larscheid says. "I usually have just as good of luck in the fall as I do in the spring, and there's less recreational boat traffic on the water. It can be so much more peaceful and relaxing than other times of the year."

With current licenses valid through Jan. 10, 2010, fishing licenses are a bargain at \$17.50. Otherwise, seven-day and one-day licenses are also available. Licenses can be purchased online at www.iowadnr.gov, or at any one of the 900-plus license vendors in the state.

Media Contact: Joe Larscheid, chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-281-5208.

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BASS CLUB ABOUT MUCH MORE THAN TOURNAMENT FISHING

Des Moines – Searching for largemouth in all kinds of weather and competitive fishing are important, but the Mid Iowa Bassmasters are better known by conservation and education professionals for their overwhelming commitment to giving back.

Organized in 1971, the Mid Iowa Bassmasters promote conservation, education, water safety, water quality and responsible tournament bass fishing. They have worked with the Department of Natural Resources to enhance fishing across the state since 1978 – helping with lake cleanups and habitat improvements as well as participating in the voluntary bass diary program.

The club began working with the Easter Seals' Camp Sunnyside in 1991 to improve Lake Cheerio for fishing, including deepening the lake and buying an aerator to prevent fish die-offs. The club's most recent project at the Camp is the construction of a new universally accessible dock on Lake Cheerio. Camp Sunnyside serves about 2,400 persons with disabilities each year.

This small club works with hundreds of kids each year, teaching them to cast, many for the first time. Mid Iowa Bassmasters were instrumental partners in piloting the school-based *Fish Iowa! Games* in 2006. Since then, they have helped conduct the Iowa Games Summer Finals Fest casting fun activities each year. The club also helps with numerous other youth fishing events in the Des Moines Metro.

Many anglers are more familiar with their annual Original Fisherman's Swap Meet and Boat Show, which they have hosted for 31 years running. Most probably don't know that proceeds from the show have funded so many philanthropic efforts.

The Mid-Iowa Bassmasters received the governor's volunteer award as a token of appreciation for their ongoing efforts in a ceremony on July 27, 2009. The award recognized the contributions and efforts of this small but mighty club.

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FORT ATKINSON RENDEZVOUS SET FOR SEPT. 26-27

FORT ATKINSON--Mark your calendars for the last weekend in September as the 33rd Annual Fort Atkinson Rendezvous comes to town.

The annual celebration recreates life as it was on the Iowa frontier in the 1840s, with authentic buckskinners, U.S. Army dragoons, black powder shoots, crafts, contents, demonstrations and period music. The two-day celebration is packed with demonstrations on basket weaving, rug hooking, pottery, blacksmithing, period hunting and trapping and more. Numerous contests are planned, including skillet throw, cooking, flint and steel, shooting, turkey calling and knife throwing competitions. Youngsters will also have an opportunity to see and play games popular with kids of that era.

The event will be held Sept. 26-27. Hours for the event are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. The theme of this year's rendezvous is "Frontier Medicine."

There is no admission charge, and parking is free. Fort Atkinson State Preserve is located on the north side of the town of Fort Atkinson in Winneshiek County, just west of Iowa Highway 24. It is approximately 175 miles northeast of Des Moines, or 90 miles north of Cedar Rapids.

For more information, contact Scot Michelson, Volga River Recreation Area park ranger, at 563-425-4161.

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HERONS AND EGRETS ON THE MOVE SPECTACULAR FALL MIGRANTS VISIT IOWA WETLANDS

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

With their large size, unique design, and stately demeanor, herons and egrets are listed among the most interesting of Iowa's fall migrants. Subsisting on a high protein diet of fish and frogs, these long legged waders are most often associated with timbered waterways, river backwaters, or shallow marshes. Regardless of where they occur, the showy birds never fail to draw the attention of human nature enthusiasts.

Egrets and herons from the north are currently arriving in Iowa, and this year's migration is shaping up to be a good one. While some regions may have received adequate August rainfall, ponds and shallow potholes continue to diminish across much of the state. As fish, frogs, and other aquatic life become crowded into smaller and smaller pools, southbound wading birds are quick to take advantage of the buffet. Easy pickings and mild weather will certainly cause many of these long legged travelers to linger.

Watching these spear-beaked wading birds hunt for food is always a good show and one to be appreciated. Today it is hard to imagine that, during the late 1800s, America nearly lost these magnificent birds as plume hunters decimated nesting colonies [called rookeries] in search of feathers. Used to adorn turn-of-the-century women's clothing, the showy white plumes of nesting egrets nearly led to the species' demise. Fetching peak market values the feathers, ounce for ounce, sold for twice the price of gold.

Although the commercial feather trade was outlawed during the early 1900s, wading birds were dealt a second lethal blow as aquatic hunting grounds became contaminated by DDT pesticides. And although the use of DDT is now outlawed in the U.S., birds may still consume quantities of DDT contaminated fish while wintering in South America.

In spite of an abundance of environmental challenges, large wading birds continue their recovery in Iowa. Although great blue and green herons are a common summer nester, great egrets remain comparatively rare. Less than a dozen active rookeries are known across the state, and most egret nests are associated with active colonies of great blue herons. The future of egrets and all other Iowa wading birds will depend on how wisely we choose to manage our wooded waterways, backwaters, and other wetland habitats.

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SPORTING CLAYS COMES TO OLOFSON SHOOTING RANGE

DES MOINES – One of the fastest growing and most exciting shooting sports has found its way to central Iowa. The Iowa DNR recently installed a state-of –the-art 10-station sporting clays course at the Olofson Shooting Range at Big Creek State Park, near Polk City.

Sporting clays, often described as golf with a shotgun, is an excellent and fun way for wingshooters to practice for the upcoming bird hunting season. A variety of targets are presented to simulate field shooting situations, like settling ducks, flushing pheasants, springing teal and bounding rabbits. The Olofson course is spread over 40 acres, and shooters may walk the 1-mile loop of stations or bring their own golf cart or UTV. Stations will be changed frequently during the fall to keep it interesting, fun and challenging.

Currently, sporting clay shoots are scheduled for Sept. 12, 13, 20 and 27, and Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25. Additional dates, tournaments and leagues will be scheduled this spring. Rates are \$20 for 50 targets and \$30 for 100. The course is also available for group outings.

For more information, go to www.olofsonrange.com or email olofsonrange@mchsi.com or call 515-795-2067

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