

An Organizer's Guide to

Fish IOWA!

Hosting a *Fish Iowa!* Event



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Aquatic Education Program
Des Moines, Iowa
2015



Foreword

The following pages contain a brief outline of how to plan and conduct a *Fish Iowa!* event. This document is designed for agencies, organizations, or individuals to use as a guide. The sample station layout references the *Fish Iowa!* teaching module and the [Passport to Fishing and Boating Program](#) so event organizers and station leaders can easily find pertinent background information, etc. Resource materials and people an organizer might utilize are listed in the appendices.

The Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Education Program provides the *Fish Iowa!* instructional module, and associated teaching aides to event organizers, educators, and youth leaders free of charge through training sessions.

For more information about conducting an event in your area, contact your local DNR fisheries office.

Equal Opportunity

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap. State law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to the Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319.

Accessibility

This information is available in alternative formats by contacting the DNR at 515/725-8200 (TYY users - contact Relay Iowa, 800/735-7942) or by writing the DNR at 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0034.

Credits

Text—Barb Gigar, layout—Barb Gigar

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How to Use This Document

Event Checklist

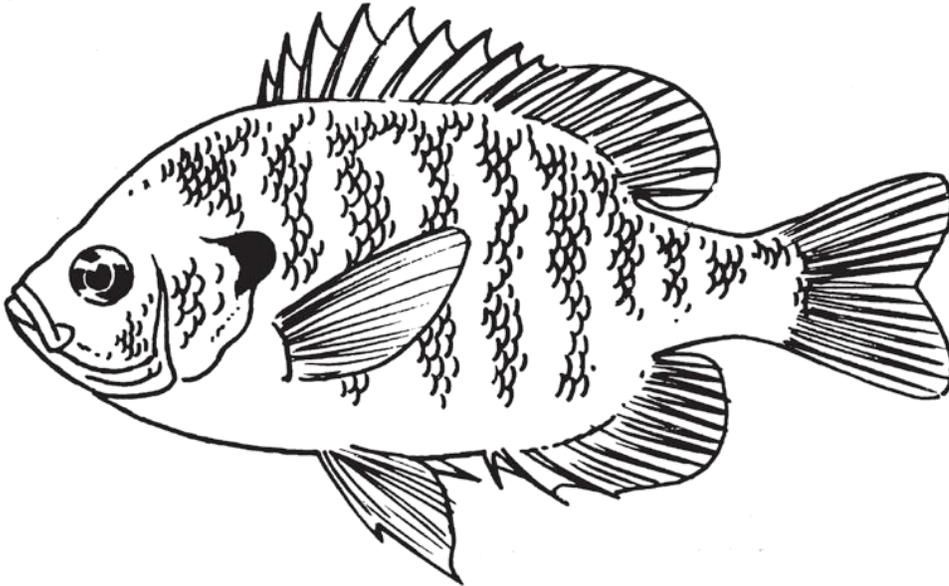
This checklist should help get you organized. It includes a brief “To Do” list to follow as you plan and conduct the event.

Suggested Station Format

This section includes outlines for six basic “stations” which can be set up to conduct your event. The outline includes a list of *objectives* for each station; *materials* needed by the instructor; *handouts* that might be provided to participants at each station; and *references* which provide information about the topic covered at the station.

Appendices

The appendices include listings of possible *resource organizations/agencies/people* who might be involved in your event; an annotated list of *reference materials* noted in the station format outline, and a *sample registration form, news release, and event schedule*.



Event Checklist

Before the Event

Planning

- _____ Begin three to six months in advance, especially if it's your first event. NOTE: June is an optimal month because youngsters are out of school, the weather usually is cooperative, National Fishing and Boating Week is observed, and Free Fishing Days occur in Iowa. However, if you wish to avoid the competition for DNR Fisheries staff time and you would like to advertise your program through schools, May might be a better choice – you can promote National Fishing and Boating Week and Free Fishing Days.
- _____ Choose a site that provides room for instruction and fishing. Make sure there are bathroom facilities, etc.
- _____ Recruit volunteers and co-sponsors. Possibilities include: local angling or conservation clubs, city recreation departments, local media, civic clubs, and retailers.
- _____ Obtain reference materials – get trained in *Fish Iowa!* if you want instructional materials to assist your presenters. (See the “Reference Materials” appendix.)
- _____ Make out a schedule for the day. Include time for stations, breaks, lunch, and fishing. This may be incorporated into a program to be handed out to participants, but even if you don't make programs available, you should provide this information to instructors, etc.

Prizes/Souvenirs

- _____ Prepare souvenir programs for the event. Include the date, location, and co-sponsors of the event.
- _____ Optional: Provide door prizes and/or refreshments. Door prizes and refreshments may be donated by a local retailer, service club, etc. It is much better to have more door prizes of lesser value so all participants are “winners.” Note: Determine ahead of time whether your goal is to improve skills and educate or provide opportunities for competition. Clinics or family fun events are to instruct, derbies/tournaments are competition. (They both have their place, but should be done separately.)
- _____ Provide certificates of participation. You can make your own or obtain *Fish Iowa!* certificates from the DNR Aquatic Education Program.

Supplies

- _____ Obtain equipment and tackle. The DNR Aquatic Education Program has free loan rods and reels available at several locations. [A list of distribution centers is available online.](#)
- _____ Obtain live fish, posters, etc. for identification purposes.
- _____ Obtain fish for cleaning and filleting demonstrations and practice.

Safety/Liability

- _____ Prepare registration/release-of-liability forms for participants. A sample is included.

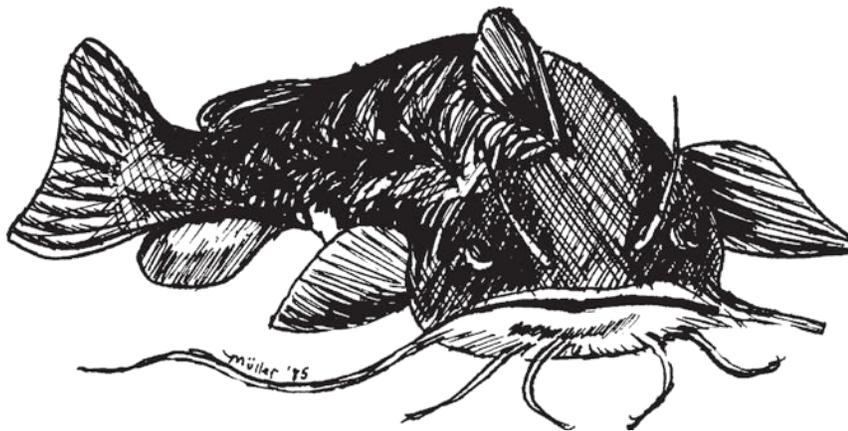
The Day of the Event

Planning/Organization

- _____ Arrange stations so participants can move easily from one to the other. (You might want to make signs to mark each of the stations as well as bathrooms, refreshments, fishing area, etc.)
- _____ Meet instructors and volunteers at the site two hours before the event starts to set up equipment and go over the schedule for the day. Point out each person's duties.
- _____ Set up a check-in table with registration forms, name tags, and programs if provided. Allow at least thirty minutes registration time prior to the start of the event. A sample program is enclosed.
- _____ Make sure rods and reels, terminal tackle, and bait are ready to go.
- _____ Make sure refreshments and any needed ice, cups, or napkins are available. (Note: Try to minimize the use of disposable containers and plates – promote conservation!)

Safety/Liability

- _____ Have a first aid kit on hand with plenty of insect repellent, sunscreen, etc.



Beginning Angler Event - Suggested Station Format

The purpose of a beginning angler event is to provide people with basic knowledge needed to begin fishing and to educate people about the aquatic environment and importance of clean water to good fishing. Hands-on activities are best for teaching skills. Demonstrations and background information or instructions should be brief – just enough to help participants be successful. Participants won't pursue the sport if they don't have fun, but you also want to produce responsible resource users.

General Format

Introduction

Introduce yourself to participants as they arrive and provide a program, or guide for stations depending on whether format is more formal (scheduled time slots with groups moving through stations) or less formal (participants move through stations at their own pace, not organized into groups).

Groups: Place participants into groups according to age and/or experience. The number of groups should be the same as the number of instructors/stations. Try to keep the number of participants in each group about equal – the most effective group size is ten to fifteen participants (groups should NOT exceed twenty-five participants). If the number of registrants does not allow this, then add stations – either duplicate stations, or break activities down to make more stations. Sessions for each station should not exceed twenty minutes in duration.

Informal: Provide a guide/map to the stations including a brief description of each. You can also include a suggested order for stations. Make sure each station is set up so participants can move through at their own pace: hands-on with clear instructions for activities. Provide handouts if needed, but oral presentations should be short, less than five minutes.

Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics

Objectives

Participants will get acquainted with:

1. Basic “rules” for dressing in the out-of-doors.
2. “Safety” gear that an angler should always carry.
3. Some safety precautions around water.
4. Fish that are protected by catch and/or length limits in Iowa – and why.
5. Some impacts that human activities can have on the aquatic and fisheries resources (including watershed use, over harvest of fish, others).
6. Ways they can help maintain healthy aquatic resources
7. How money from fishing license sales is used.

Materials

Personal floatation devices (PFD's) First aid kit
Sunscreen
Insect repellent

Handouts

Iowa Fishing Regulations
Length limit rulers
Quick Fishing Facts

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 1: Introduction to Fishing (p. 1:10-15)
Fish Iowa! Appendix E: Water Safety Activities

Station #2: Fish Identification

Objectives

Participants will get acquainted with:

1. General characteristics of a fish and the special adaptations it has for living in an aquatic environment.
2. Species of fish common to Iowa waters (especially game fish).
3. Feeding habits of certain species and relate this to the strategies anglers use to catch them.

Materials

Fish (live if available)
Fish group identification posters
Iowa Fish ID Guide Iowa Fish and Fishing

Handouts

Iowa Fish ID Guide
Fish Iowa! Handout 2-1: Iowa Fish Families

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 2: Fish Senses and Characteristics

Station #3: Tackle Types

Objectives

Participants will get acquainted with:

1. Parts of a spincasting rod and reel and the function of each.
2. Various types of terminal tackle.
3. The importance of balanced tackle.
4. Species of fish likely to be caught with different types of terminal tackle.

Materials

Spincasting rods and reels
Tackle (examples of basic terminal tackle) Lures

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 3: Basic Spincasting Equipment and Techniques (p. 3:4-6)
Fish Iowa! Unit 4: Baits and Lures (p. 4:6-9)

Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Tie a basic fishing knot.
2. Set up a basic terminal tackle rigging.

Materials

Knot tying boards or other materials to practice knot tying
Terminal tackle and line for assembly

Handouts

Fish Iowa! knot tying directions (p. 3:7)

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 3: Basic Spincasting Equipment and Techniques (p. 3:6-7)

Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proper spincasting techniques.

Participants will be acquainted with:

1. Casting “do’s” and “don’ts.”
2. The procedure for setting the hook.
3. How to land a fish.
4. How to catch and release a fish.

Materials

Spincasting rods and reels
Casting plugs
Casting targets

Handouts

Fish Iowa! Casting Do’s and Don’ts (p. 3:9)

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 3: Casting (p. 3:8)

Fish Iowa! Unit 5: Landing and Caring for the Catch (p. 5:3-4)

Station #6: Fish Cleaning

Objectives

Participants will be acquainted with:

1. Proper techniques for cleaning/skinning/filleting fish. OPTIONAL: Allow participants to try one or more methods of preparing fish.
2. OPTIONAL: Do a cooking demonstration and allow participants to try prepared fish.
3. OPTIONAL: Demonstrate methods of preserving the catch in the field.
4. OPTIONAL: Demonstrate procedures for longterm preservation of fish.

Materials

Fish (whole – fresh or frozen) Fillet knives, boards, and gloves Knife sharpener

Water, towels, newspapers

Containers for meat and refuse

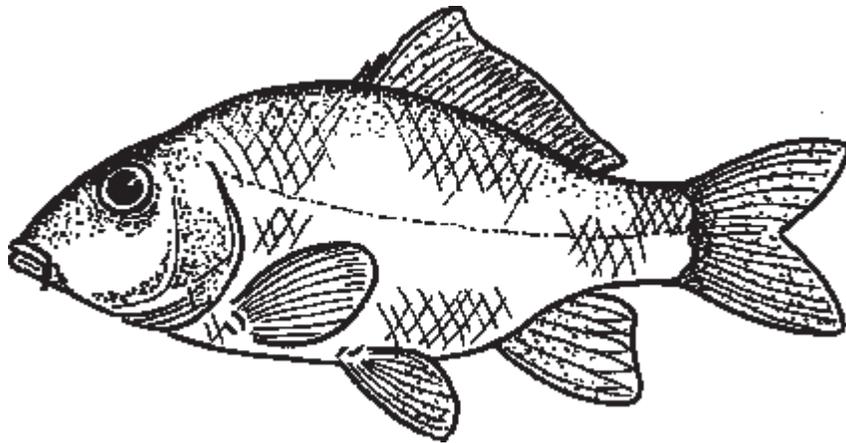
OPTIONAL: Deep fryer or electric skillet, ingredients for fish batter

Handouts

Fish Iowa! Directions for Cleaning Fish (p. 5:6-8)

References

Fish Iowa! Unit 5: Landing and Caring for the Catch (p. 5:5-11)



Fishing Experience

After participants have completed the circuit of stations they should have the opportunity to practice their new skills. The fishing experience should be at least an hour. Make sure that enough volunteers/instructors are on hand should participants need assistance. If your event is for youngsters, assign “fishing buddies” for those not accompanied by an adult. (Note: Always encourage adults to accompany youth.) If you have event participants over sixteen years of age, remember they must have a license unless the event is conducted during Free Fishing Days.

Wind-up

Formal events: Call participants together at the end of the fishing period. Hand out certificates of participation, door prizes, and any awards you are distributing at this time. Make sure that awards are not such that competition becomes a top priority of participants. It is important that everyone leave the event feeling successful.

Informal Events: You can use punch cards or another system for participants to document visiting stations. Hand out certificates and other items when cards are turned in. You can also enter completed cards into a drawing, or provide other incentives for participants to visit all stations. Door prizes, etc. can be handed out throughout the event if it is “come and go.”

General handouts which may be distributed at this time:

Fish Iowa! Window Decal

Fish Iowa! stickers

Fish Iowa! certificates

Resource Organizations, Agencies, and People

DNR Aquatic Education Program

[Barb Gigar](#), western Iowa training specialist, 515-494-3891

[Holly Schulte](#), eastern Iowa training specialist, 319-530-9318

The Aquatic Education Program provides materials to event organizers (see reference materials list) as well as the *Fish Iowa!* teaching module. Event organizers can get the module through free training sessions. The Aquatic Education Program also publicizes events through our online calendar and other regional/statewide communication channels.

DNR Fisheries Offices

DNR fisheries biologists often assist event organizers by doing station presentations. If you are doing a event for the first time, a biologist may also be able to help you find an appropriate location and/or co-sponsor(s) for the event.

[Fisheries Management Field Offices](#)

DNR Recreational Safety Officers (RSO)

Recreation safety officers are conservation officers whose main emphasis is promoting safe outdoor recreation and providing safety education programs. These programs include: Boating Safety Education, Bowhunter Education and Ethics, Hunter Education, Snowmobile Safety Education, and Trapping Ethics Education. RSO's are located in each of the six law enforcement districts throughout the state.

[District Offices](#)

DNR Conservation Officers (CO)

Conservation officers are law enforcement officers who protect the fish, wildlife, and citizens of Iowa. These officers provide public relations materials including programs for classrooms and youth groups. CO's often assist event organizers by doing station presentations and often know of good locations for events as well as possible cosponsors who may assist you in your endeavor.

[PDF of Conservation Officer Contact Information](#)

TIP (Turn In Poachers) 1-800-532-2020

County Conservation Boards

Many county conservation boards have environmental education personnel on staff who may be able to assist in planning and/or conducting your event. The conservation board in your county may even be sponsoring a event already. Check your local yellow pages under "County Government" or visit <http://www.mycountyparks.com/default.aspx> to find your CCB's website.

Fishing Clubs

Fishing clubs are an excellent source for station presenters since members are often very knowledgeable about the sport. They may also be willing to assist in the planning and/or presentation of the event.

Service Organizations

Do not underestimate the assistance that can be provided by the wide variety of service organizations. They can provide everything from volunteers to financial support for the event. Contact your local organizations to find out how they might want to be involved. A variety of service organizations are already involved in co-sponsoring events around the state!

City Parks and Recreation Departments

Parks and Recreation Departments are responsible for developing and/or sponsoring a variety of recreational activities. Several are already involved in hosting fishing events, so be sure to contact the parks and recreation department in your town or city.

Rod and Reel Distribution Centers

A list of locations where you might obtain DNR free-loan rods and reels is available at www.iowadnr.gov/education/files/rodreel.pdf. Contact the distribution center nearest you to reserve tackle for your program.

Reference Materials

Fish Iowa! A Teaching Module

Materials include an instructor's manual with five units that focus on the basics of spincasting, supplemental handouts, audiovisual resources, posters, and free-loan rods and reels. Materials are provided free of charge through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Aquatic Education Program. Educators and youth leaders receive the materials through training sessions.

Passport to Fishing and Boating Program

The program offers an introduction to a lifetime of recreation for families with little or no previous fishing and boating experience. Six "hands-on" stations with activities focused on fishing, boating, and aquatic stewardship are included. Station topics include fish habitat and handling; boat smart, boat safe; fishing knots and rigging; casting, ready, set, boat; and local information. Materials can be downloaded from <http://takemefishing.org/general/about-rbff/programs-and-materials/education/passport/passport-stations/>.

Sample Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

___ Age of Participant

Release of Liability / Photo Release

As parent or legal guardian of _____ I certify that said individual has my permission to attend and participate in the fishing event/program sponsored by _____ to be held on _____, 20_____, at _____ from _____ a.m./p.m. until _____ a.m./p.m. In signing this form, I hereby waive and release all other participants, the host, sponsors, and all other officials or parties involved in the event from all claims and/or damage incurred in connection with the event. I also hereby grant the sponsors and co-sponsors the unconditional right to use the name, voice, and photographic likeness of _____ in connection with any of their audio/video productions, articles, or press releases, but not as an endorsement.

Signature, Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Sample News Release

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 23, 2015

Contact: Barb Gigar (641/747-2200)

Fishing Event Scheduled June 7, 2014

Guthrie Center, IA – A fishing event for all ages will be held at Springbrook State Park on June 7, 2014. The free event will be held from 9:00 a.m. until noon by the concession building at the beach. Participants will learn to identify, locate, and catch fish. They will also learn how to clean and cook their catch.

The Fish Lady will be on hand to visit with the youngsters and all participants will receive a tackle pack. Participants should bring along a pop can to make a casting rig and try their luck on the plug golf course!

Interested individuals may pre-register by calling the park or sign-up between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. the day of the event.

Please contact us if you require special accommodations.

Sample (Formal) Event Schedule

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Registration

Have participant guardians complete registration forms. Divide participants into six groups (bass, bluegill, crappie, catfish, walleye, carp) for station rotations. Designate a volunteer or parent/guardian to lead each group through the stations.

9:00 - 9:05 Introduce Presenters

9:05 - 9:20 Session 1

Station	Group
Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics	Bass
Station #2: Fish Identification	Bluegill
Station #3: Tackle Types	Crappie
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly	Catfish
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch	Walleye
Station #6: Fish Cleaning	Carp

Rotate

9:20 - 9:35 Session 2

Station	Group
Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics	Carp
Station #2: Fish Identification	Bass
Station #3: Tackle Types	Bluegill
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly	Crappie
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch	Catfish
Station #6: Fish Cleaning	Walleye

Rotate

9:35 - 9:50 Session 3

Station	Group
Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics	Walleye
Station #2: Fish Identification	Carp
Station #3: Tackle Types	Bass
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly	Bluegill
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch	Crappie
Station #6: Fish Cleaning	Catfish

Rotate

9:50 - 10:05

Session 4

Station

Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics
Station #2: Fish Identification
Station #3: Tackle Types
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch
Station #6: Fish Cleaning

Group

Catfish
Walleye
Carp
Bass
Bluegill
Crappie

Rotate

10:05 - 10:20

Session 5

Station

Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics
Station #2: Fish Identification
Station #3: Tackle Types
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch
Station #6: Fish Cleaning

Group

Crappie
Catfish
Walleye
Carp
Bass
Bluegill

Rotate

10:20 - 10:35

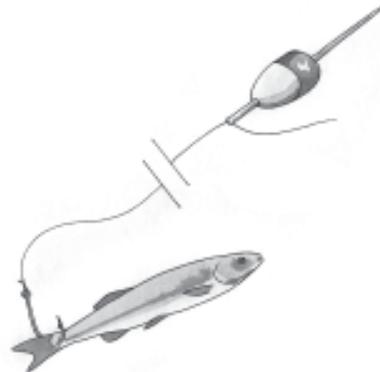
Session 6

Station

Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics
Station #2: Fish Identification
Station #3: Tackle Types
Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly
Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch
Station #6: Fish Cleaning

Group

Bluegill
Crappie
Catfish
Walleye
Carp
Bass



10:35 - 10:50

Prepare for Fishing

Gather participants; pair more experienced anglers with novices if parents/guardians are not present. Distribute tackle and review safety procedures as well as how the fish will be handled, etc.

10:50 -11:50

Fishing

Be sure to have plenty of volunteers on hand to assist!

11:50 - Noon

Wrap up

Distribute certificates, tackle packs, handouts, and any other “goodies.”

Dismiss, Have a Safe Trip Home!



Sample (Informal) Event Schedule

8:30 - noon

Registration

Have participants complete registration forms. Hand out maps to stations including location for loaner rods and reels. Share any special instructions (i.e., turn in completed station punch card before fishing, or for a prize drawing, etc.).

9:00 - Noon

Station Activities

Station #1: Water Safety, Fishing Regulations, and Ethics

Station #2: Fish Identification

Station #3: Tackle Types

Station #4: Knot Tying and Tackle Assembly

Station #5: Casting, Hooking, and Landing the Catch

Station #6: Fish Cleaning

10:00 - Noon

Fishing

Hand out loaner equipment if needed (you might ask for an ID [i.e., license] to assure loaner equipment is returned; provide appropriate terminal tackle for participants who bring rigs.

Be sure to have plenty of volunteers on hand to assist!

11:00 - Noon

Wrap up

Distribute certificates, tackle packs, handouts, and any other “goodies.” Be prepared for some participants to finish stations/fishing earlier.

Noon

End of Event

Final announcements/thank yous.

Collect any loaner equipment still out.

Door Prize drawings

Clean up area