

Clean water makes a difference

Creating a home for wildlife



Just as we depend on clean water to survive, so do wildlife and fish. They also depend on us to keep our waters clean. We need to work to keep Iowa's lakes, streams and rivers clean for the birds, fish, plants and insects that call our waterways home.

Wildlife, fish need clean water

We expect water to be clean when we go swimming, boating, fishing or when we turn on the tap for a drink. It's no different for wildlife and fish. They depend on clean water every day to survive. Water is a home, a playground, a source of food, a place to drink. There are a number of animals that make water environments their home, including pelicans, ospreys, otters, great blue herons, fish, and waterfowl, like ducks and geese. When species like trumpeter swans and trout thrive, it tells us the environment around them is healthy, and their presence – with grace and vitality – can inspire us to do more for all clean water efforts.

What poor water does

Pollutants like sediment, bacteria and nutrients can take their toll on life in and around the water, disrupting delicate balances in nature. If we do nothing to improve our waters, it makes it easier for undesirable plants and fish to grow. Because these plants and fish are capable of living in unhealthy conditions, they can quickly push out plants that help improve water quality. They also quickly outnumber the types of fish that thrive in clean water, the kinds anglers want to hook.

Our responsibility

We have a responsibility to keep our streams, rivers and lakes clean. Not only for ourselves, but for the animals and fish that live there year-round, and for wildlife like pelicans that stop in Iowa on their yearly migration south.

What you can do to help

We need to stop pollutants before they can reach lakes, streams and rivers. We need to reduce our use of pesticides and fertilizers on our farms and lawns. Planting trees and prairie plants along waterways helps filter herbicides, pesticides and sediment before they can reach water. These plants and trees also create valuable habitat for wildlife, like songbirds, herons, pheasants, quail and wild turkeys. In urban areas, creating rain gardens in backyards and open spaces can catch extra runoff before it can send pollutants into lakes and streams. We also need to keep trash out of storm sewers, which lead directly to streams and lakes.

Improving water quality is necessary to ensure we have clean water for ourselves, for our children and for the countless species of wildlife and aquatic life that depend on us, both now and into the future.

For more information:

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