



Thomas Hazelton <countyparksiowa@gmail.com>

Jan. 27 Iowa Outdoors

1 message

Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

<DNR.Media@dnr.iowa.gov>

Reply-To: DNR.Media@dnr.iowa.gov

To: Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards <IACCB@mycountyparks.com>

Tue, Jan 27, 2015 at 11:19 AM



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JANUARY 27, 2015www.iowadnr.gov | [facebook.com/iowadnr](https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr) | twitter.com/iowadnr | [pinterest.com/iowadnr](https://www.pinterest.com/iowadnr)

1. Ice Conditions Deteriorating Across Southern Iowa
2. Lake Sugema, Lacey-Keosauqua and Shimek State Forest Attract Outdoor Enthusiasts Year Round
3. Lower Morse Lake Draws Hunters

ICE CONDITIONS DETERIORATING ACROSS SOUTHERN IOWA

Winters on-again off-again appearance this year is causing ice conditions on lakes to deteriorate across much of southern Iowa. In central Iowa, many areas have around six inches of good ice under an inch or two of poor ice.

"The stretch of warm and windy weather we are experiencing will likely cause many of our areas to deteriorate, especially along shore. Anglers should use caution around the edges when getting on and off the ice," said Ben Dodd, fisheries biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The forecast calls for more seasonable temperatures for the weekend, but it might not be enough for ice fishing to return to some areas.

Ice conditions from around Hwy. 20 and north hasn't been impacted as much, but either way, anglers should use caution as the unseasonably warm weather can cause conditions to change rather quickly.

DNR fisheries technician Kurt Meek said Clear Lake has quality ice over much of the lake, with 17-18 inches of ice in the little lake area. "We've had a few anglers pull their permanent shacks off Clear Lake ahead of the warm weather as a precaution," Meek said.

With winter seemingly losing its grip, ice anglers are encouraged to bring safety equipment with them; 50 feet of rope, a throwable cushion and a spud bar.

Ice depths are not uniform on any body of water and there is no such thing as safe ice. There are many factors that impact ice formation making some locations thinner than others. With the warm weather, ice conditions can change a lot in one day. Verify the ice thickness for yourself and test it often.

"Don't go out alone and if the ice does not look right, don't go out," Dodd said.

MEDIA CONTACT: Joe Larscheid, Bureau Chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-201-3376](tel:515-201-3376).

-30-

LAKE SUGEMA, LACEY-KEOSAUQUA AND SHIMEK STATE FOREST ATTRACT OUTDOORS ENTHUSIASTS YEAR ROUND

With three stories of Steamboat Gothic architecture, the Hotel Manning in Keosauqua beckons weary hunters.

"I'd say 35 percent of my business is hunting and fishing related," states owner/manager Ron Davenport. "The biggest impact is the weekends, during the shotgun deer seasons. But I get fall bowhunters, a lot of them from out of state. They stay a week at a time."

Van Buren County was one of the top counties where deer were harvested in Iowa. And it doesn't stop there. "Quite a few spring turkey hunters, too. (Hunting) is a major industry around here," adds Davenport.

Through the warm weather months, his customers are bass tournament anglers or those pursuing crappies and bluegills on nearby Lake Sugema. Anglers are just learning about the fantastic fishing in the ponds of Shimek State Forest. And catfishing on the Des Moines River is excellent--spring through fall.

Outdoor recreation in all varieties draws visitors to the dozen communities which make up the Villages of Van Buren. Arts and crafts, lodging, meals and supplies are packed in to this cluster of towns, and wooded countryside, defined by the winding Des Moines.

In Cantril, stop for lunch and stay for the boots. The Dutchman's Store features sandwiches, produce, kitchenware, gifts and high end work/outdoor boots.

"Hunters come in for custom deli sandwiches; free coffee year round too," notes The Dutchman's Kevin Zimmerman. "And then get interested in the boots and clothing."

The villages are all positioned within a few miles of Lake Sugema, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park and Shimek State Forest. Fishing is nearly year round. Fall hunting seasons lure deer and upland game hunters from across Iowa...and out of state. Come spring, the gobbler potential in this outdoors mecca has turkey hunters doubling back for another dose of southeastern Iowa hospitality.

-30-

LOWER MORSE LAKE DRAWS HUNTERS

The nearly 1,900 acres Lower Morse Wildlife Management Area has always been popular among pheasant and waterfowl hunters and even today when the pheasant population is far from its heyday, the area still draws hunters from Wisconsin to New York and surrounding counties.

Area parking lots are filled during each opening weekend of the early and late waterfowl seasons, and continue to draw pheasant hunters, many of whom stay at Flatlander Outfitters at nearby Elm Lake.

Yale Schutt, who owns Flatlander Outfitters, watches it all unfold from his bed and breakfast he and his wife Diane started in 2002.

He said a group from Wisconsin has been coming to the area a few times each year for a decade, and have met enough locals, that they are now hunting primarily private land that adjoins the public areas where they began.

"They're good guys to have around," Schutt said.

Other groups have also found Schutt. Hunters from Shell Rock who didn't have much luck in South Dakota have been pheasant hunting in Wright County five times this past fall, Schutt said. While his bookings have been steady, other businesses in the area have noticed fewer hunters stopping by.

"The area is still well hunted," said Mark Soma, assistant manager and part owner of the True Value in Belmond that sells hunting supplies. "But when pheasant numbers were really good, we had better traffic."

Not all news is bad news. Late-season pheasant hunters are reporting better-than-expected hunts in parts of Iowa.

“Lower Morse has been giving up a fair number of roosters, especially since we got the snow,” said Ken Lonneman, conservation officer for Wright and Hancock counties.

Even non hunters are coming by to look at birds and enjoy the expansive area.

The Lower Morse Lake area was designated as a bird conservation area on Aug. 6, 2009, signifying that it is one of Iowa’s most important grassland/wetland complexes for nesting and migratory grassland and wetland birds.

- 30 -

MICK KLEMESRUD Information Specialist

Iowa Department of Natural Resources



P 515-725-8280 | F 515-725-8201 | mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov

Wallace Building | 502 East Ninth Street | Des Moines, IA 50319

WWW.IOWADNR.GOV



Leading Iowans in Caring for Our Natural Resources.

Please Note: My new phone number is 515-725-8280, and new fax number is 515-725-8201.

—
You are currently subscribed to major_statewide_media as: IACCB@mycountyparks.com.
To unsubscribe click the Unsubscribe link below, or send a blank email to: leave-999250-10891386.9a5dc933ee2c145b3c46328d31d66ab9@Lists.ia.gov
[http://Membership.Lists.ia.gov/u?id=10891386.9a5dc933ee2c145b3c46328d31d66ab9&n=T&c=F&I=major_statewide_media\(click here to unsubscribe\)](http://Membership.Lists.ia.gov/u?id=10891386.9a5dc933ee2c145b3c46328d31d66ab9&n=T&c=F&I=major_statewide_media(click here to unsubscribe))

If you received this message from a friend and would like to sign up for DNR Press Releases e-mails, please send a blank e-mail to: major_statewide_media@lists.ia.gov