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**Oct. 22 Iowa Outdoors**

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**Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

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To: Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards &lt;IACCB@mycountyparks.com&gt;

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# IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** OCTOBER 22, 2013[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) | [facebook.com/iowadnr](https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr) | [twitter.com/iowadnr](https://twitter.com/iowadnr) | [pinterest.com/iowadnr](https://www.pinterest.com/iowadnr)

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## IOWA'S PHEASANT SEASON OPENS SATURDAY

Iowa pheasant hunters can expect to find the best bird numbers in northwest, north central and central Iowa and while the number of birds in the field is well below peak years, good hunting opportunities do exist.

“Even with low counts some hunters will have excellent hunts and plenty of opportunities and others will be able to flush a bird or two and put one in the bag,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “The key is good habitat and good dogs.”

The latest crop harvest reports indicate nearly half of the corn remains in the field. As more corn is harvested, pheasants will be concentrated in available habitat. Areas with excellent winter cover like cattails or switch grass have the potential to hold some birds, and currently, the best cover is primarily on public land.

“Hunters looking for birds and are flexible should identify public land with good winter cover in north central, central or northwest Iowa. Those regions have the better pheasant numbers,” he said. Hunters can use the DNR’s online hunter atlas to do some “online” scouting of these areas.

Also available is more than 7,500 acres of private land in 27 counties; to be utilized for public hunting through Iowa’s Hunting and Access Program (IHAP). A list of areas and maps is available at [www.iowadnr.gov/ihap](http://www.iowadnr.gov/ihap)

Hunting pressure will be highest during the first two weekends of the season, and then around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Based on the results of Iowa’s upland game survey, hunters should expect to harvest 100,000 to 150,000 pheasants during the October 26-January 10 season.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-432-2823](tel:5154322823).**

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## THINK SAFETY BEFORE OPENING DAY

Hunters heading to the field for the opening weekend of pheasant season are encouraged to review safe hunting practices before they head out.

“Brushing up on safety should be part of every hunting plan,” said Megan Wisecup, with the Department of Natural Resources Hunter Education Program. “Go through the zone of fire with the hunting party, talk about avoiding target fixation and swinging on game.”

Wisecup said hunters should get reacquainted with the techniques used to hunt pheasants – be sure to walk in a straight line and know where members of the hunting party are at all times, especially in low visibility areas like terraces, tall switch grass and standing corn.

“Wear plenty of blaze orange especially on the upper one third of your body. We are encouraging hunters to wear more blaze orange than the minimum required. The goal is to be seen by other hunters,” Wisecup said.

“The top pheasant hunting incidents all are related to not being seen. The shooter swings on a rooster, the victim is out of sight of the shooter or the rooster flew between the shooter and the victim.”

Wisecup said safety also extends to the canine companions.

“Avoid low shots to prevent injuring your hunting dog,” she said.

“The hunting plan and safety practices are all part of a responsible hunt. The goal at the end of the day is for everyone to return home safely.”

### **Tips for a Safe Hunt**

- Iowa law requires hunters to wear at least one of the following articles of visible, external apparel with at least 50 percent of its surface area solid blaze orange: hat, cap, vest, coat, jacket, sweatshirt, shirt or coveralls.
- Hunters should stay in communication with each other and to stay in a straight line while pushing a field. Conservation officers have investigated a number of incidents where hunters have been in a semicircle and had been shooting towards one-another.
- Discuss the hunting plan that spells out how the hunt will take place, each person’s role in the hunt and where each person will be at all times.
- Make sure to unload the gun when crossing a fence or other obstacle to avoid it accidentally discharging.
- Properly identify the target and what is beyond it. This will be especially important for the next few weeks if hunting in fields that still have standing corn.
- If hunting with a dog, never lay a loaded gun against a fence. Hunting dogs are usually excited to be in the field and could knock the gun over causing it to discharge.
- Share the hunt. Take someone new along to help keep Iowa’s great hunting tradition alive.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Megan Wisecup, Hunter Education Administrator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-238-4968](tel:515-238-4968).**

## DRIVERS STAY ALERT FOR DEER MOVEMENT

Although it is always a good practice, drivers are reminded to stay alert for deer as they travel Iowa's roadways over the next few weeks. Increased deer movements due to crop harvest and deer breeding behavior combine to hike the risk of vehicle-deer collisions during this period.

Beginning now through the third week of November, Iowa bucks and does are more active, as the breeding season builds to its peak. This creates scenarios of fast moving, unpredictable deer crossing highways. With crop harvest in full swing, deer are also pushed into the remaining cover.

Another factor that increases the risk of seeing deer will be the change away from daylight savings time on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. This places more of us behind the wheel during the dusk and dawn period. Twenty one percent of road killed deer observed by the DOT along Iowa's rural highways and interstates came in November in 2012. Second was October, with 14 percent.

The easiest way to minimize your risk of hitting a deer is to simply slow down and remain alert, especially around dawn and dusk. Many accidents occur near brushy or tree lined waterways that cross roads. And if you see one deer there may be a second or third following. Drivers are also reminded 'Don't veer for deer/'. Leaving your lane of traffic could cause a collision with another vehicle or a roadside obstacle, such as a utility pole or culvert.

Still, while this combination of factors challenges drivers, Iowa's deer herd has shrunk and the number of deer related accidents has dropped significantly since 2003. This is attributed to a decade of increased deer harvest. Hunters, Iowa's primary deer management tool, increased their take of does over the last decade.

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(Photo is attached)

## HUNTER EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS REACH 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

Two volunteer instructors from Clinton County were recognized this summer for each achieving 50 years of service with the Iowa Hunter Education Program.

Bill Ogan (left) and Jim Haring (right) assist with the classes at the Clinton County Izaak Walton League. They are pictured with Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Recreational Safety Officer Terry Nims.

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## DNR TO ANSWER FALL HUNTING QUESTIONS LIVE ON FACEBOOK

DES MOINES — Iowans with fall hunting on their minds will want to mark their calendar for Oct. 24, when DNR wildlife research supervisor Willie Suchy will answer fall hunting questions live on the DNR's Facebook page.

Suchy will be available via Facebook from noon to 2:30 p.m. To ask a question, post it as a comment on the "Live Q&A" post that the DNR will post at noon that day. You can also post questions ahead of time on the DNR's Facebook Timeline at [www.facebook.com/iowadnr](http://www.facebook.com/iowadnr). Questions received after 2:30 may be answered at a later time.

To make sure you see the Live Q&A when it is posted, make sure you "like" the page on Facebook. Go to [www.facebook.com/iowadnr](http://www.facebook.com/iowadnr) and click on "like" and make sure "get notifications" and "show in news feed" are selected.

Commenters should also view the DNR's Facebook posting policy ahead of time at <https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr/info>.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Jessie Brown, DNR, at **515-281-5131** or [Jessie.Brown@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jessie.Brown@dnr.iowa.gov)

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## NEW HAMPTON MAN WINS ADVENTURE READY GIFT CARD GIVEAWAY

Mark Bruening, from New Hampton, is this week's winner of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Adventure Ready Gift Card Giveaway. Bruening won a \$50 gift card generously donated by Cappel's Ace Hardware, in Atlantic.

Hunters and anglers who purchase one of four new licenses in 2013 will be automatically entered into a weekly drawing for a \$50 gift card.

To participate in the drawing, Iowans can simply purchase one of the four qualifying licenses at any license retailer or on the DNR's website at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov). The four qualifying licenses are:

- **Bonus Line License** – resident and nonresident anglers can fish with one additional line (with the purchase of the annual fishing license, which allows two lines), for \$12.
- **Outdoor Combo License** – annual resident hunting/fishing/habitat combo license for \$47.
- **Angler's Special** – a three-year resident fishing license for \$53.
- **Hunter's Special** – a three-year resident hunting license with habitat included for \$86.

The DNR will draw every Monday at noon and announce the weekly winner on its website and through Twitter on Tuesday afternoon. The promotion will run through December 23, 2013.

Theisen's Home Farm Auto, in Dubuque, is sponsoring the Oct. 28 gift card drawing. Weekly winner announcements, gift card sponsors and complete drawing details can be found at [www.iowadnr.gov/giveaway](http://www.iowadnr.gov/giveaway).

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