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Oct. 7 Iowa Outdoors

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IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 7, 2014

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HIGH SCHOOL CHEFS TACKLE FLYING FISH AT INDIAN HILLS COMPETITION

OTTUMWA - It's a fish that created buzz when videos appeared showing them flying out of the water when startled by a motor boat in an Illinois river, but will it have that same buzz when it appears on a menu?

Silver carp, the invasive species expanding its reach in rivers in and around Iowa, will be the featured ingredient at Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) Culinary Arts Department's cooking competition based on the Food Network's Iron Chef America television show on Oct. 17.

Chef and program chair Gordon Rader has built IHCC's Culinary Arts Department into a nationally recognized, award winning program. He has held this competition twice each year for the past seven years as a way to attract high school students who are serious about a career in the culinary arts.

High school teams from Burlington, Mediapolis, Fort Madison, Ottumwa, Eddyville-Blakesburg, Cardinal and Mount Pleasant will compete for scholarship money to attend IHCC's Culinary Arts program. The six person teams and their teachers will demonstrate their skills in the on-campus studio in front of about 75 friends and family from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The competition follows a similar format to the television show – contestants are judged on their kitchen skills, service and taste. Chef Rader intentionally creates a stressful environment giving students a real world scenario then see how they react.

In the TV show, the chefs do not know the secret ingredient. For this competition, Rader provided teams with it ahead of time because the fish are difficult to work with due to their boney structure.

The Iowa DNR collected silver carp for the competition.

"I'm interested to see what these high school students can do with it," Rader said. "It's an enjoyable fish to eat. The students said that it tasted better than tuna."

These fish have white flesh with a mild flavor unlike its cousin the common carp that feeds on the bottom and has a strong fish taste.

"These fish taste more long the lines of our panfish or catfish. The only issue is the amount of bones and it takes some practice to clean one," said Joe Larscheid, chief of Fisheries for the Iowa DNR. "This is a resource that can be exploited. These are non native fish that are here and we want people to use them. What we don't want is for these fish to expand into new areas because they can negatively impact existing fish populations."

Silver and bighead carp are an invasive species from Asia that were imported to commercial catfish farms in the south as a way to maintain their ponds in the 1970s. By 1980, the fish were found outside of those facilities, in natural waters. These carp feed by filtering water over their gill rakers that trap microscopic organisms that compete for food directly with native aquatic species. They can grow from 50 pounds to more than 100 pounds.

EARLY MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASON BEGINS OCTOBER 11

Iowa's popular early muzzleloader deer season begins Saturday. The season is an opportunity for hunters to pursue deer using muzzle loading rifles or pistols. The early muzzleloader deer season runs from Oct. 11 – 19.

Hunters can expect deer behavior to begin changing as the breeding season, or rut, gets closer. Bucks are starting to show signs of preparing for the rut by making scrapes and rubs. Some cool weather may cause an increase in this behavior.

Deer will have plenty of places to hide as the harvest has been delayed due to cold and wet conditions. They will likely be seeking out any remaining green browse and acorns, if available. Stand sites that take advantage of these food resources or trails connecting them to bedding areas are good bets during this season.

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) that impacted the deer herd in certain local areas was not reported in 2014. Deer will begin moving in to those areas where a void was created by the disease in 2012 and 2013.

Muzzleloader hunters should remember that well camouflaged bowhunters and others who enjoy the fall countryside will be sharing the woods with them. Hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset and muzzleloader hunters are required to wear blaze orange

All deer taken must be reported using the harvest reporting system by midnight the day after the deer is recovered. Accurately reporting your kill is an important part of the deer management program in Iowa, playing a vital role in managing deer populations and future hunting opportunities. Hunters can report their deer online at www.iowadnr.gov, by calling 1-800-771-4692 or at any license vendor. For hunters with Internet access, the online reporting of your harvest is the easiest way to register your deer.

Last year, early muzzleloader hunters reported harvesting about 2,950 deer.

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DEER IN A SINKHOLE

Sinkholes in northeast Iowa are a fact of life. But...a deer in a sinkhole? Not so much.

Now, though, a 10-point buck has a new lease on life, thanks to three high school friends, who rigged up a late night rescue and pulled him from the Winneshiek County sinkhole. The rescue is captured on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzVJX-vnOfw&feature=share>

The half-hour saga unfolded on the Gary Smorstad farm, east of Decorah. While haying October 3, the renter's tractor tire slipped into a recently opened sinkhole. Smorstad and the neighbor towed it free; looked

down and saw a deer looking at them.

Home that night from college, and after the high school football game, Smorstad's son Eric, Gavin Nimrod and Bryton Meyer picked it up from there.

Buying a rope and clip, they drove through the dark field until the headlights picked out the sinkhole.

"It was hard to see; only three or four feet wide and maybe ten feet deep," recalls Nimrod. "We made a loop, caught an antler and kept his head up. We decided to tie another rope; Eric and Bryton held my legs and I went down and re-tied it."

From there, they just pulled until the buck's antlers, head, and finally front legs were above ground.

"He stopped fighting and looked around, like he was grateful," said Nimrod. "Then he got his legs under him and took off. The rope caught on the side and busted the clip off and he was gone over the hill. We were hooting and hollering. Up until then, winning the (2012) state football championship was the best thing that ever happened to us. Now, *this* is."

As the rescue began, the friends propped up Meyer's phone on the pickup to capture it all. Good thing, too. It was hard for people around town to believe.

"Before the video was out, people were looking at us, like were nuts!" laughed Nimrod. "We told them, you can't make up a story like that."

The video is their proof.

Do they see any irony; three hunters saving a deer from a slow, certain death?

"I am an outdoorsman...I love hunting the animals and love to share the experience with others," posted Meyer on YouTube. "(But) to share that experience...is what we were going for... not to simply save an animal's life, although I do show tremendous respect for the animals that I hunt."

Nimrod, too, noted that saving the Sinkhole Buck's life had no conflict with hunting and ethic of fair chase.

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DRIVERS ALERT, AS DEER ACTIVITY INCREASES

Shorter days and cooler fall temperatures are reminders to Iowa drivers. The risk of deer-vehicle collisions will rise in the coming weeks. On the plus side, your chance of hitting a whitetail has dropped over the year before.

Deer activity will increase through October and the first half of November, as the peak of the rut—or deer breeding season—approaches. This comes as more drivers are on the road during dawn and dusk and as the

crop harvest opens more fields...pushing deer toward remaining cover.

Though drivers should still remain alert, deer populations have been reduced in the last seven years; and are at or below levels recorded in the mid-1990s. Since 2006, that has pushed the reported harvest down 33 percent and the number of road kills down by 39 percent. That reduction has come through emphasis on harvesting does; through the county by county antlerless tag format and seasons available to hunters.

In its annual report on vehicle-deer claims, State Farm Insurance indicates that Iowa drivers are 5.5 percent less likely to hit a deer in the coming year than they were last year. Iowa again dropped on State Farm's list of 'high incidence' states...to fourth this year, from third last year.

You can further reduce your chance of hitting a deer by remaining alert near potential deer crossings, slowing down during dawn and dusk--high deer travel periods—and not veering out of your lane if a deer strike appears imminent. By 'veering for deer,' you may leave the roadway, with the risk of striking a pole, bridge abutment or other hazard...or of facing oncoming traffic, in another lane.

Likely deer funnels include creeks, fence lines or trees leading up to road crossings. Deer are likely to follow them, for the cover they provide, before crossing the short stretch of open road to the other side. By watching the road shoulders and fence lines you can better detect a deer near the road. Remember, too, if one deer crosses the road; chances are couple more are nearby.

As the peak of the rut approaches in early November...there will be increased activity as bucks begin following does often oblivious to roadway traffic. That means daytime sightings of deer as that breeding pressure knocks deer out of their normal nocturnal patterns.

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