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correction: Nov. 25 Iowa Outdoors

1 message

Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

<DNR.Media@dnr.iowa.gov>

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AM

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

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

Incorrect injury statistics from 2013. The correct statistics are

In 2013, there were nine firearms/bow deer hunting related incidents in Iowa: six personal injuries and three property damage. There were six elevated falls related to deer hunting. There were no deer hunting fatalities in 2013.

The news release has been corrected. Please use this version.



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NOVEMBER 25, 2014

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IOWA'S 2014 SHOTGUN DEER SEASON PREVIEW

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

December-like cold and snow in November make it seem as if Iowa's shotgun deer season has already past. However, it is still a week away. That leaves time to contact landowners, sight in your shotgun and tend to all the details before you get out and enjoy Iowa's outdoors with friends and family.

"I expect we'll see a harvest similar to last year," said Dale Garner, chief of Wildlife for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "The extreme cold weather during mid-November kept many bow hunters out of their tree stands leaving some really nice bucks for the shotgun seasons."

Expect about 75,000 hunters across Iowa in the first shotgun season, December 6-10, and then another 50,000 head out December 13-21, during the second gun season. Each contingent will also pack along thousands of antlerless tags, to extend their prospects.

If you are a fan of cold weather...and have a muzzleloader, that December 22-January 10 late season attracts hunters holding about 30,000 tags. That number likely will drop, though, with fewer snapping up county antlerless tags.

Iowa's shotgun seasons allow for group drives; drivers pushing deer toward blockers. Anyone in the group may tag a downed deer—with their own tag. That stands in contrast to other states—and even Iowa's more solitary muzzleloader and bow seasons. However, it has proven to be an efficient method for taking deer, since modern deer hunting was introduced here in the early 1950s. Whatever the season, any deer must be tagged before it is moved or within 15 minutes—whichever comes first.

It also holds the potential for danger, as drivers move closer to, or across, their friends on a drive.

"That's why wearing solid blaze orange is mandatory. At least the minimum (torso covered). More is better," stresses DNR recreation safety officer Pat Jorgensen. "Our number one cause of deer hunting incidents involves a hunter shooting at a running deer...with someone in the area. Recognize what stands in front of and behind the target!"

For several years now, deer hunters have noticed fewer whitetails than in the early 2000s. That is by design. A decade ago, state lawmakers instructed the DNR to reduce the deer population, after steady growth through the previous few decades.

With addition of county and season specific antlerless tags, generous quotas, and a couple extra seasons, near Thanksgiving and during January, hunters responded. The deer herd is now at mid-1990s target levels, in all but a handful of counties.

With a 33 percent drop in harvest numbers since 2006, Iowa's Natural Resource Commission this summer approved a reduction in antlerless tag quotas in 72 counties. The remaining 27 north central and northwest counties have no county antlerless tags...and hunters may take only *antlered* deer during the first shotgun season.

Expect fewer tags, than the 359,956 which went over the counter in 2013-2014. And that was down 11 percent from the 2008 peak. Iowa's overall deer harvest across all seasons last year was 99,400...down 34 percent from the peak.

"Now is a good time for the DNR to work with hunters and landowners to help develop a better understanding of proper deer management; including the benefits of harvesting does and keeping deer numbers at ecologically acceptable levels," stresses DNR wildlife management biologist Terry Haindfield. "Hunters working with landowners at the local level are the best and most efficient way to keep deer numbers acceptable and provide a high quality deer herd."

MEDIA CONTACT: Willie Suchy, Wildlife Research Supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-725-8499](tel:515-725-8499).

CHANGES TO IOWA DEER HUNTING SEASONS

Iowa deer hunters will likely notice fewer seasons and changes in certain seasons this year when purchasing their licenses.

The January antlerless deer season has been eliminated, the number of antlerless deer tags has been reduced and hunters in 27 northwest counties are allowed only antlered deer during the first shotgun and early muzzleloader seasons.

Crossbows were allowed as a legal method of take for resident Iowa hunters during the late muzzleloader season.

DNR TO CONTINUE SURVEILLANCE FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

The Iowa DNR's wildlife staff will be collecting tissue samples during Iowa's shotgun deer seasons to test for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Iowa's wild deer herd. The effort will concentrate on portions of northeast and eastern Iowa near Wisconsin and Illinois, south-central Iowa near Missouri, as well as in Pottawattamie, Cerro Gordo and Buchanan counties, following positive tests from captive facilities and the first positive test for a wild deer in or near those counties last year.

Most of the 4,500 samples the DNR hopes to collect will be taken during the first half of December, as more than 120,000 hunters take part in Iowa's shotgun deer seasons. Sampling involves removing and testing the brain stem and lymph nodes.

Many hunters voluntarily contribute samples of their harvested deer for these testing efforts. Most samples are obtained by wildlife staff, checking with hunters in the field or at home processing points.

Hunters willing to provide samples may contact the DNR regionally to arrange collection. In Allamakee, Clayton and Winneshiek counties, call [563-380-3422](tel:563-380-3422); in Dubuque, Jackson, Clinton, Scott and Delaware counties, call [563-357-2035](tel:563-357-2035); in Davis, Wapello, Van Buren and Jefferson counties, call [641-799-0793](tel:641-799-0793); in Wayne, Appanoose and Monroe counties, call [641-203-6185](tel:641-203-6185); in Pottawattamie County, call [712-350-0147](tel:712-350-0147); in Cerro Gordo County, call [641-425-2814](tel:641-425-2814); and in Buchanan County, call [319-213-2815](tel:319-213-2815).

Since 2002, more than 50,000 wild deer in Iowa have been tested, with only one positive CWD result in the wild herd detected in Allamakee County in 2013.

Iowa DNR's website provides information about CWD and other information on infectious disease at: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/DeerHunting/CWDEHDInformation.aspx>

REGISTER YOUR HARVEST

Your deer is down, tagged and on its way to the truck. Your harvest is not complete, though, until you register it; online, over the phone or at a license vendor.

For hunters who have registered deer for years, there is no change. Online, it takes just a couple minutes. Go to www.iowadnr.gov and click (left margin) 'deer hunting.' From there, click 'Report Your Harvest' and follow instructions. Be ready to enter your tag's nine-digit harvest report number. By phone? Call [800-771-4692](tel:800-771-4692).

The deer should be reported by the hunter whose name is on the tag...and it must come before midnight, the day *after* the deer is tagged. The harvest reporting system provides information much faster, and with more detail, than the previous, cumbersome postcard survey. This leads to more responsive management of deer populations; such as adjusting county by county tags or special zone hunt allotments.

HUNTERS USE POPULAR PROGRAM TO DONATE DEER MEAT TO FOOD BANK OF IOWA

Have an extra deer at the end of the hunt? Maybe you bought an extra tag, to hunt longer? Consider donating to Iowa's HUSH program. HUSH (Help Us Stop Hunger) works with 82 participating lockers to provide high quality meat to needy Iowans, through the Food Bank of Iowa.

Field dressed deer are skinned, de-boned and ground into two-pound packages...then distributed to needy families. The program is funded by hunters, who pay a dollar surcharge with each deer tag purchase.

In its second decade now, HUSH has provided meat from 60,000 deer to those who need it—3,900 last year. Processors receive \$75 for their end of the work. The Food Bank of Iowa picks up \$5, as it oversees

distribution.

Each locker will accept whole deer, asking the hunter to fill out a Hunter HUSH card. There is no fee paid at the locker. A list of participating lockers is available in the Iowa Hunting Regulations and online at www.iowahush.com.

MEDIA CONTACT: Willie Suchy, Wildlife Research Supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-725-8499.

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BASIC FIREARM RULES ARE IMPORTANT FOR A SAFE HUNT

The first of Iowa's two shotgun deer seasons opens on Dec. 6, and while optimism for a successful hunt is the primary focus, hunters are encouraged to brush up on safe hunting practices.

Basic firearm rules are pretty straight forward: treat every firearm as though it were loaded; always point the muzzle in a safe direction; be sure of your target and what's beyond it; keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

"Our deer hunting tradition is shared with our friends and our family," said Megan Wisecup, hunter education administrator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "Practicing safe hunting techniques is important to make sure we all get home at the end of the day."

An estimated 140,000 hunters are expected to take to the timber during Iowa's two shotgun deer seasons and Wisecup said self inflicted injuries and property damage continue to be prominent.

"Those incidents could be avoided by simply following the basic rules of firearm safety and ensuring there is a safe backdrop prior to taking a shot," she said.

"Hunters tend to get fixated on their target and when a deer is running, they forget about their surroundings. Look beyond your target and clearly identify the target before taking the shot," Wisecup said. "You must be certain you have a clear, safe shot. Never point your firearm at anything you do not want to shoot."

That advice can help to prevent self inflicted wounds as well.

Wisecup encouraged hunters to wear plenty of blaze orange and to discuss the hunting plan with everyone in the group.

"You want to be seen from all sides in the woods," she said. "It is also important to discuss the hunting plan that will outline the role for each person and where they will be during the hunt. Plan your hunt and hunt your plan. It is critical to communicate with your hunting partners to ensure everyone knows where each other is at all times."

In 2013, there were nine firearms/bow deer hunting related incidents in Iowa: six personal injuries and three property damage. There were six elevated falls related to deer hunting. There were no deer hunting fatalities in 2013.

Hunting Safety Tips

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded
- Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- Be sure of the target and what is beyond it
- Keep finger off the trigger until ready to fire
- Keep the barrel clear and choose the proper ammunition.

Winter Weather Factors

- Unload the firearm and open the action when crossing obstacles – if snow and ice is on the ground, the risk of slipping or falling dramatically increases
- Visibility – put the hunt on hold if visibility is poor due to fog and/or snowy conditions
- Bundled up – keeping your finger off the trigger and muzzle control are both extremely important as bulky coats and gloves increases chances of an accidental discharge

Hunter Visibility

- Wear plenty of blaze orange. Hunters want to be seen from all sides in the woods and fields
- Discuss the hunting plan with everyone in the group. Outline the role for each person and where they will be throughout the hunt. Plan your hunt and hunt your plan. Communication is critical to ensure everyone knows where each other is at all times.

Ultimate Goal

- Everyone gets home safely

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

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SIGHT IN GUNS BEFORE DEER SEASON BEGINS

Hunters have the opportunity to get reacquainted with their gun before deer season begins at 11 Iowa Department of Natural Resources' shooting ranges across the state.

The first of two shotgun deer seasons begin Dec. 6.

“Ultimately, most hunters want their guns sighted in for shots up to 100 yards for deer season. We suggest they come to a shooting range and begin at closer distances like 25 yards and work their way out,” said Chris Van Gorp, shooting sports and range coordinator for the Iowa DNR. “Practicing and knowing how the gun will perform before opening day is a good way to prepare for a successful hunt.”

Ranges managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/PlacesToHuntShoot/IowaShootingRanges.aspx>

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Van Gorp, Shooting Sports and Range Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-725-8251.

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POPULAR BRUSHY CREEK TRAIL FEATURES NEW BRIDGE

LEHIGH, Iowa - A newly installed multi-use trail bridge below the outlet from Brushy Creek Lake replaced a rocked stream crossing that had a history of washing out.

The 75-foot long, 10-foot wide bridge is part of a \$150,000 project that enables hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, snowmobilers and cross country skiers to safely cross the stream rather than using the roadway over the dam.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' AmeriCorps trail crew and park staff provided labor and materials connecting the bridge crossing with the existing 12 mile long multi-use, all weather trail.

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area has Iowa's largest multi-use trail system at 40 miles.

MEDIA CONTACT: Whitney Davis, State Trails Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-725-8491.

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2014 DNR VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS AWARDED TO

RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

AMES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Bureau, in cooperation with US Forest Service - State and Private Forestry, has awarded \$207,807 in 50 percent cost-share grants to 82 rural Iowa fire departments to aid their efforts in protecting Iowan's and their property from wildfires.

The grants offer valuable funding assistance for wildfire suppression equipment, personal protective equipment and communications equipment.

The following fire departments should be watching for the notification that their 2014 VFA Grant requests have been approved: Afton, Amana, Anita, Ashton, Atlantic, Avoca, Belle Plaine, Cambridge, Carson, Centerville, Chariton, Cincinnati, Cleghorn, Cushing, Delaware, Dow City, Drakesville, Duncombe, Eldora, Eldridge, Elgin, Elkader, Elkhart, Garber, Garwin, Gilbert-Franklin Twsp, Goodell, Goose Lake, Grant, Greeley, Hamburg, Harlan, Independence, Iowa Falls, Irwin, Jamaica, Janesville, Jefferson-Monroe, Joice, Kiron, Lime Springs, Little Sioux, Little Sioux/Grant Twsp, Smithland, Logan, Lucas, Manly, Manning, Mapleton, Martelle, Montpelier, Moorhead, Merville, Neola, Nevada, New London, North Keokuk County, Northwood, Norwalk, Otho, Oxford, Pacific Junction, Peterson, Pleasantville, Polk-Packwood, Postville, Prescott, Ridgeway, Rolfe, Russell, Searsboro, Sidney, Solon/Tri-Township, Spirit Lake, Stratford, Strawberry Point, Stuart, Van Meter, Vinton, Wallingford, Wapello, Waterville, and West Union.

Gail Kantak, fire supervisor with the DNR's Forestry Bureau, stressed the importance of submitting Wildland Fire Reports whenever fire departments respond to a wildland fire or provide assistance to a prescribed or controlled wildland fire.

Departments actively returning these reports receive priority points when the Volunteer Fire Assistance grant applications are scored. These wildland fire reports are compiled locally and nationally and are reported to Congress.

Wildland Fire reporting forms and spreadsheets are available at www.iowadnr.gov/fire.

Media Contact: Gail Kantak, Fire Supervisor, Forestry Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-233-8067.

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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.

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