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Dec. 30 Iowa Outdoors

1 message

Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 30, 2014

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MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE COUNTS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

With 'real' winter closing in on Iowa now, bald eagles are in line, for state and continent-wide attention. Between now and mid-January, biologists and other conservationists will spread out over survey routes; for a midwinter head count.

Their story is pretty well documented through the last half dozen decades. Through the mid-20th Century, eagles feeding on fish and other animals with the dangerous chemical DDT in their systems ingested it themselves. Egg shells thinned dangerously, driving down successful hatch of offspring. The environmental crisis led to a DDT ban and federal legislation protecting eagles and their habitat.

"They were listed as a federally endangered species," underscores DNR wildlife diversity biologist Stephanie Shepherd. "Although de-listed in 2007, we still monitor eagles; to ensure nesting populations and overall numbers are doing well."

The North American Mid-winter Eagle Survey is especially important in Iowa; one of the more important wintering states.

In the 1970s, Iowa's winter eagle count was in the dozens. Now, in an extra cold winter, you can see that many below about any Mississippi River lock and dam along the Mississippi River. At Keokuk and a couple other 'hot spots,' it arcs into the hundreds.

Last January, record cold, ice and snow cover concentrated the regal raptors into what little open water remained. That made them easy to spot.

"As a result, we had almost 5,000 eagles, 500 more than just five years prior," recounts Shepherd.

This year, don't expect another bulge like that.

Our relatively mild conditions this season have spread the big birds across the landscape. On the other hand, it is more likely to see one or two eagles miles from their favorite winter haunt...rather than multiple birds near what little open water remains during a snowy, bitter cold winter.

Still, savvy eagle watchers will focus on the water. Open pools below a river dam are the best places to start.

The Mississippi River lock and dam system is a bald eagle magnet...with several communities taking advantage of the cold weather tourism to host bald eagle appreciation celebrations. Likewise, several 'eagle days' are held along interior streams; such as the Des Moines and Iowa rivers. Check the DNR website, or call a community's visitor's bureau for a potential late-January to early March date and location.

Otherwise, pack a spotting scope or binoculars and keep your eyes on the sky. The colder the weather, the better your chance of spying on the regal raptor.

2015 HUNTING, FISHING LICENSES ON SALE

Iowans may now begin purchasing 2015 resident hunting, fishing and other licenses.

The menu of license options includes the popular Outdoor Combo annual resident hunting/fishing/habitat combo license for \$47; the Angler's Special three-year fishing license for \$53; and the Hunter's Special three-year hunting license with habitat included for \$86.

Also available is the Bonus Line option for \$12 allowing resident and nonresident anglers to fish with one additional line in addition to the two lines allowed with the regular fishing license.

Iowa hunting and fishing license fees remain unchanged for 2015.

2014 licenses are valid through Jan. 10, 2015.

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2014 HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE SALES

In 2014, Iowans purchased...

Fishing

233,594 annual fishing licenses

*6,968 three year fishing licenses

*5,679 bonus line third fishing line

6,440 lifetime fishing license

1,052 seven day fishing license

2,679 one day fishing license

39,010 trout stamps

*43,499 outdoor combination hunting/fishing/habitat licenses

Hunting

35,030 annual hunting licenses

*73,693 annual hunting/habitat combination licenses

*2,006 three year hunting/habitat licenses

2,406 lifetime hunting licenses
33,575 habitat fees
26,621 migratory game bird fees
17,763 fur harvester licenses
*737 fur harvester/habitat combination licenses
52,877 any deer shotgun season 1 licenses
47,048 any deer shotgun season 2 licenses
54,411 any deer bow license
18,915 any deer late muzzleloader licenses
9,740 youth season deer licenses
16,892 spring turkey season 1-3 licenses
16,225 spring turkey season 4 licenses
5,716 spring turkey bow licenses
5,041 spring turkey youth licenses

Landowner licenses

32,620 any deer licenses
28,020 antlerless licenses
5,209 spring turkey licenses

In 2014, nonresidents purchased...

Fishing

15,688 annual fishing licenses
2,054 seven day fishing licenses
10,773 three day fishing licenses
10,881 one day fishing licenses
4,368 trout stamps

Hunting

10,961 hunting licenses

*10,320 hunting/ habitat combination licenses

13,095 habitat fees

2,538 migratory game bird fees

Deer

Any deer applications by nonresidents

3,584 bow licenses

2,543 shotgun season 1 licenses

893 shotgun season 2 licenses

1,075 late muzzleloader licenses

10,091 preference points

*New license/combination in 2013

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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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