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**Feb. 10 Iowa Outdoors**

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

Tue, Feb 10, 2015 at 11:29

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

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



# IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** FEBRUARY 10, 2015[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) | [facebook.com/iowadnr](https://facebook.com/iowadnr) | [twitter.com/iowadnr](https://twitter.com/iowadnr) | [pinterest.com/iowadnr](https://pinterest.com/iowadnr)

1. 2015 National Pheasant Fest Returns to Des Moines Feb. 20-22
2. DNR to Hold Listening Session on Fall Hunting and Trapping Regulations
3. Rice Lake Returns
4. Walleye Season Closes Feb. 15 on Iowa Great Lakes
5. Ice Fishing Shelters Must be Removed by Feb. 20
6. Spring Outdoors Woman Workshop Ready for Registrations

## 2015 NATIONAL PHEASANT FEST RETURNS TO DES MOINES FEB 20-22

DES MOINES – The 2015 National Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic returns to Des Moines, February 20-22, at

the Iowa Events Center.

The Department of Natural Resources is a proud sponsor of the event, put on by Pheasants Forever, a leading conservation organization and DNR partner in conservation efforts in Iowa. The event focuses on wildlife conservation, upland game bird hunting (pheasant and quail), dog training, and wildlife habitat management and restoration, with seminars, demonstrations, activities and vendors supporting these topics. The event promises to have something for the whole family.

DNR personnel, including wildlife biologists, foresters, conservation officers, recreational safety officers and conservation educators, will be on hand at a variety of venues throughout the weekend. DNR staff will be at the DNR booth to answer questions of the public, and at the Habitat Help Room to give one-on-one habitat advice to interested landowners.

Kids will find plenty to do in the Youth Village with continuous activities, entertainment, drawings, games and presentations.

DNR recreational safety officers and staff will be assisting various stations at the event including an air rifle range, 3D archery range, snowmobile simulator, treestand safety demonstrations, presentation on improving your shotgun shooting skills and more.

The DNR will also be assisting Pheasants Forever with hosting an Archery in the Schools Pheasants Forever Invitational on Sunday. This will be a last chance qualifying event for Iowa National Archery in the Schools Program registered participants' who wish to qualify for the state shoot slated to be held in conjunction with the Deer Classic on March 7, as an individual archer.

DNR personnel and others will give seminars and demonstrations each day on a variety of topics at a variety of stages.

For a complete schedule of events at Pheasant Fest visit [www.pheasantfest.org](http://www.pheasantfest.org).

Pheasant Fest hours are Friday 1 to 8:30 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 6 PM and Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM. Daily admission for adults to the show is \$10 per person, ages 6-16 is \$5 and children 5 and under are free. Daily admission tickets are only available for purchase at the door of the event.

The annual Pheasants Forever event began in 2005 and was hosted by Iowa in 2007 and 2010. The event expects to draw more than 25,000 people.

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## **DNR TO HOLD LISTENING SESSION ON FALL HUNTING AND TRAPPING REGULATIONS**

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is hosting a public meeting over the Iowa Communications Network on February 25 from 6 to 9 p.m., to listen to the public's thoughts on the hunting and trapping regulations for this fall.

These meetings are part of the process for making rules in state government.

"Any rule changes must be discussed with Iowa's citizens who might be impacted by the changes before the rule changes are proposed. The process helps ensure that rule changes serve the public's wishes and do not impact Iowa's economy," said Dr. Dale Garner, chief of the wildlife bureau.

At each meeting DNR staff will facilitate a discussion about what went well last fall, what didn't, and what changes hunters and trappers would like to see for this fall.

These discussions along with the data that the wildlife bureau collects on harvest and population numbers will be used to develop recommendations for any rule changes this fall. Any changes must be approved by the Natural Resource Commission and then go back to the public for further comment before taking effect next fall.

Meetings will be held in Atlantic, Boone, Chariton, Clear Lake, Council Bluffs, Creston, Davenport, Decorah, Dubuque, Marshalltown, Monroe, Ottumwa, Sac City, Sergeant Bluff, Sheldon, Spencer, Tiffin, Waverly and West Burlington.

Complete ICN locations are available online at [www.iowadnr.gov/hunting](http://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting)

## 2015 - 2016 General Hunting Season Framework *(if no changes are made)*

Species	Season Dates	Shooting Hours	Bag Limit	
			Daily	Possess
Rooster Pheasant (Youth)	Oct. 24 – 25	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	1	2
Rooster Pheasant	Oct. 31 - Jan. 10, 2016	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	3	12
Bobwhite Quail	Oct. 31 - Jan. 31, 2016	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8	16
Gray Partridge	Oct. 10 - Jan. 31, 2016	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8	16
Ruffed Grouse	Oct. 3 - Jan. 31, 2016	Sunrise to Sunset	3	6
Rabbit (Cottontail)	Sept 5 - Feb. 28, 2016	Sunrise to Sunset	10	20
Squirrel (Fox and Gray)	Sept 5 - Jan. 31, 2016	No Restrictions	6	12
Groundhog	Continuous Open Season	No Restrictions	No Limit	No Limit
Crow	Oct. 15 - Nov. 30 and Jan. 14 - March 31, 2016	No Restrictions	No Limit	No Limit
Groundhog, Pigeon	Continuous Open Season	No Restrictions	No Limit	No Limit
Coyote (hunting)	Continuous Open Season	No Restrictions	No Limit	No Limit

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## 2015 Deer Hunting Seasons *(if no changes are made)*

Season	Season Dates
Youth Season	Sept. 19 - Oct. 4
Disabled Hunter Season	Sept. 19 - Oct. 4
Archery Season	Oct. 1 - Dec. 4 & Dec. 21 - Jan. 10, 2016

Early Muzzleloader	Oct. 17 - 25
Regular Gun Season 1	Dec. 5 - 9
Regular Gun Season 2	Dec. 12 - 20
Late Muzzleloader	Dec. 21 - Jan. 10, 2016
Nonresident Holiday Season	Dec. 24 - Jan. 2, 2016

**BAG LIMIT:** Daily Bag and Season Possession Limit is one deer for each valid license and transportation tag issued to the hunter.

**SHOOTING HOURS:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset

### 2015 – 2016 Furbearer Hunting Seasons *(if no changes are made)*

Species	Seasons	Shooting Hours	Daily	Possession
Raccoon, Opossum,	Nov. 7 - Jan. 31, 2016	8 a.m. on First Day	No Limit	No Limit
Badger, Striped Skunk				
Fox (Red and Gray)				
Bobcats	Nov. 7 - Jan. 31, 2016	8 a.m. on First Day	1	1

### 2015 – 2016 Furbearer Trapping Seasons *(if no changes are made)*

Species	Season	Hours	Daily	Possession
Coyote, Mink, Muskrat,	Nov. 7 - Jan. 31, 2016	8 a.m. on 1 <sup>st</sup> Day	No Limit	No Limit
Weasel, Striped Skunk,				
Badger, Opossum, Raccoon,				
Fox (Red and Gray)				
Beaver	Nov. 7 - Apr 15, 2016	8 a.m. on 1st Day	No Limit	No Limit
Otter	Nov. 7 - Jan 31, 2016	8 a.m. on 1st Day	2	2
Bobcat	Nov. 7 - Jan 31, 2016	8 a.m. on 1st Day	1	1
Civet Cat (Spotted Skunk)	Continuous	Closed		
Gray Wolf	Continuous	Closed		

### 2015-2016 Migratory Birds seasons *(if no changes are made)*

<u>Waterfowl Season</u>	<u>North Zone</u>	<u>South Zone</u>	<u>Missouri River</u>
Ducks, Mergansers and Coots	Oct. 3 – 18	Oct 3 – Oct 7	Oct. 3 – Oct. 7
	Oct. 24 – Dec. 6	Oct 17 – Dec 10	Oct. 24 – Dec. 17

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Sept. 26 – 27	Oct 10 – 12	Oct 17 – 18
Canada geese and Brant	Sept. 26 – Jan. 1, 2016	Oct. 3 – Jan. 8, 2016	Oct. 10 - Jan. 15, 2016
White-fronted geese	Sept. 26 – Dec. 8	Oct. 3 – Dec. 15	Oct. 10 – Dec. 22
Light Geese (white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese)	Sept. 26 – Jan. 10, 2016	Oct. 3 - Jan. 15, 2016	Oct. 10 – Jan. 15, 2016

**SPECIAL SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE SEASONS** Only in designated zones around Des Moines, Cedar Rapids/Iowa City and Cedar Falls/Waterloo.

Canada Geese Sept. 5 – 13

## STATEWIDE

Special September Teal Season	Sept 5 -20
Light Geese Conservation Order (white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese)	Jan. 16 - April 15, 2016
Doves (Mourning and Eurasian Collared)	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9
Woodcock	Oct. 3 - Nov. 16
Snipe	Sept. 5 - Nov. 30
Rail (Sora and Virginia)	Sept. 5 - Nov. 13

**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset for all species except woodcock and teal during the special September teal season, which are sunrise to sunset.

### Daily Bag Limits:

**Ducks:** Daily limit is 6, including no more than 4 mallards (of which no more than 2 may be female), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 3 scaup, 2 pintail, 1 black duck, and 2 canvasback.

**Mergansers:** Daily limit is 5, including no more than 2 hooded mergansers.

**Coots:** Daily limit is 15.

**Geese:** The daily limit for Canada geese is 2 from September 26 through October 31 and 3 Canada geese from November 1 through the end of the season. During the special September Canada goose season within the Des Moines, Cedar Rapids/Iowa City and Cedar Falls/Waterloo Zones, the daily is 5 Canada geese. The daily limits for white-fronted geese, brant, and snow geese are 2 white-fronted geese, 1 brant, and 20 snow geese.

**Doves (Mourning and Eurasian Collared):** Daily limit is 15.

*Woodcock: Daily limit is 3.*

*Snipe: Daily limit is 8.*

*Rail (Sora and Virginia): Daily limit is 12.*

**Possession Limits:**

*Possession limits are three times the daily bag limit for ducks, coots and geese except light geese for which there is no possession limit and two times the bag limits for doves, woodcock, snipe and rails.*

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**2015 Fall Turkey Hunting (if no changes are made)**

License Types	Season Dates
Gun/Bow	Oct. 12 - Dec. 4
Archery Only	Oct. 1 - Dec. 4 AND Dec. 21 - Jan. 10, 2016

**BAG LIMIT:** Daily Bag and Season Possession Limit is one wild turkey for each valid license and transportation tag issued to the hunter.

**SHOOTING HOURS:**

Gun: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset

Bow: 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset

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**2016 SPRING TURKEY HUNTING SEASON DATES (if no changes are made)**

**Combination Gun/Bow Licenses**

Youth Season (Residents Only) April 9 - 17

Season 1 April 18 - 21

Season 2 April 22 - 26

Season 3 April 27 – May 3

Season 4 May 4 - May 22

**Resident Archery-only Licenses: April 18- May 22**

**BAG LIMIT:** Daily Bag and Season Possession Limit is one bearded or male wild turkey for each valid license and transportation tag issued to the hunter.

**SHOOTING HOURS:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset

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

## RICE LAKE RETURNS

The topic was lake restoration, but in 2009, the small group of lake users living near Rice Lake wasn't ready to discuss pulling the plug on the 1,000-acre shallow lake straddling the Worth-Winnebago county line.

Fishing was boom or bust (mostly bust), peaking in 2010 with good crappie, perch and walleye fishing. The lake was full. Residents were satisfied.

But an unbiased look at the lake showed little habitat, with turbid green water and less than a dozen people boating and duck hunting on it.

Rice Lake is a big state lake, with little public use.

Then opportunity knocked.

The drought of 2012 took hold, dropping Rice Lake's water level low enough that the citizenry didn't think the fish would survive the approaching winter. Suddenly, renovation discussion was on the front burner.

In 2013, DNR fisheries biologist Scott Grummer and DNR wildlife biologist T.J. Herrick met with the public, hearing concerns about how long it would take for Rice Lake to refill and when fishing would return. They presented a vision of Rice Lake with clear water, a quality fishery that was attractive to wildlife.

The community was on board.

The fishery had a number of issues, one of which was a significant bullhead population that made establishing aquatic plants difficult. While the lake was dewatered, any remaining water ponds were chemically treated during the winter to make sure no fish remained.

The combination of drought and dewatering the lake allowed vegetation to take root and when Rice Lake began holding water again, the improvement in lake water quality was striking.

Before renovation, you could see down 8 inches in the water. After renovation, it was 5 feet.

Gone was years of poor water quality and trash from the lake bottom along with it. While the water was low, local volunteers combed the shoreline to remove trash and debris from the exposed lake bed.

As the lake began to refill, fathead minnows returned and in huge numbers. Those minnows were greeted by hungry yellow perch, northern pike, walleye, and largemouth bass that were stocked in 2014. The perch have shown explosive growth reaching nearly seven inches in year one and Grummer expects them to hit 10 inches by fall 2015.

The response by wildlife has been just as impressive.

"We are seeing incredible use of Rice Lake, even by teal," says Herrick. "Lots of ducks, swans, sandhill cranes, just about anything that uses water is there."

In the past, there were only two places on the lake to duck hunt. Now, with better water quality and vegetation, "we could have a spot for every duck hunter in north Iowa," says Rock Bridges of Lake Mills.

He expects to see muskrat huts, goose nesting sites and otters return.

The balancing act for lake managers is to handle interests from homeowners, boaters, anglers and hunters.

The lake has refilled to within 18 inches of crest and the results are impressive. The water changed from green to blue; submergent vegetation has knocked down wave action so much that it's near impossible to get a white cap even on the windiest day. Waterfowl using the lake shifted from mergansers and shovelers to mallards and teal. Tiger salamanders and thousands of leopard frogs and dragonflies cover the shoreline – all signs of good water quality.

The final piece of the puzzle is to install a new outlet to allow the DNR to manage the lake water level to simulate Mother Nature's cycles to keep the lake in this healthy state.

The 1,000 acre lake with its 1,000 acre watershed is set up to be a high-quality resource for years to come. "The lake is in its healthiest state right now with all the aquatic plants, invertebrates and the final result has not yet been realized," Grummer says.

The Rice Lake story, as well as other success stories from 2014, are highlighted in "Working for Clean Water: 2014 Watershed Improvement Successes in Iowa," a booklet available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WaterQuality/WatershedImprovement/WatershedSuccesses.aspx>.

For more information on the DNR's watershed improvement efforts, contact Steve Hopkins at [515-725-8390](tel:515-725-8390) or at [Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov) or visit [www.iowadnr.gov/watershed](http://www.iowadnr.gov/watershed)

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## **WALLEYE SEASON CLOSES FEB. 15 ON IOWA GREAT LAKES**

SPIRIT LAKE – The walleye fishing season on Spirit, East and West Okoboji lakes closes on February 15 and opens again on May 2. These are the only Iowa lakes that have a closed season for walleye.

For more information on fishing regulations, go to [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

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## **ICE FISHING SHELTERS MUST BE REMOVED BY FEB. 20**

DES MOINES – Permanent ice shelters must be removed from all state-owned lands and waters by February



20. Ice shelter owners are encouraged not to wait until the last minute to get their shelter off the ice. If a shelter falls through the ice, the owner is responsible for getting it out of the lake.

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## SPRING OUTDOORS WOMAN WORKSHOP READY FOR REGISTRATIONS

The popular Iowa Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program is taking registrations for its second annual workshop at Honey Creek Resort State Park. The two-and-a-half-day event will be held April 24-26, 2015.

"We are inviting women to welcome spring with some new-found outdoor skills they can learn at our workshop," says Julie Sparks, coordinator of the Iowa BOW program.

Participants can select from a menu of classes that include introduction to firearms, biking, fishing, kayaking, Dutch oven cooking, geocaching, archery, basic shooting, birdwatching, motorboating and landscaping for wildlife.

"We are also offering a wild game cooking class taught by Honey Creek Resort's own Chef Bob and have two opportunities for participants to learn about wild turkeys and turkey hunting," says Sparks. "The area has historically been an excellent location for spring turkey hunting and participants can learn more about the sport and maybe even call in some gobblers."

Honey Creek Resort is located on the shores of Lake Rathbun in Appanoose County and offers spacious guest rooms, scenic nature trails, an indoor waterpark and whirlpool, Rathbun Lakeshore Grille & Lounge, and other amenities associated with a quality resort experience.

Cost of the spring workshop is \$250 for a single occupancy room and \$200 for double occupancy. The fee includes instruction, program materials, equipment use, meals and lodging. Registration is limited to 75 participants and women are encouraged to register as soon as possible. The deadline for registration without a late-fee penalty is April 3. Registration materials and more information can be found at [www.iowadnr.gov/bow](http://www.iowadnr.gov/bow)

**Contact: Julie Sparks, BOW Coordinator, Iowa DNR, 515-725-8285 or [julie.sparks@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:julie.sparks@dnr.iowa.gov)**

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

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