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**Feb. 24 Iowa Outdoors**

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

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# IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** FEBRUARY 24, 2015

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## **COLD, BUT SUCCESSFUL START TO CWD DEER SAMPLING IN ALLAMAKEE COUNTY**

By Joe Wilkinson

## Iowa Department of Natural Resources

HARPERS FERRY – Despite single digit temperatures and brutal winds, 27 deer were collected, and sampled over the weekend, to help determine the extent of Chronic Wasting Disease in southeast Allamakee County. Landowners and regular season hunters from the area are working with scientific collector permits to harvest adult deer across 31 sections, in two townships, near Harpers Ferry.

The goal is to collect 150 samples on private property and 50 in Yellow River State Forest, after three deer –harvested in the area during the 2014 hunting season—tested positive for CWD. In 2013, the first wild deer to test positive was taken in the same vicinity. Those four samples are the only CWD-positive returns on *wild* Iowa deer, among 57,000 samples collected, since 2002.

These special collection samples will be added to 311 from deer harvested during the recently completed hunting season in the same sections. “We are trying to keep this local and work with the people who have always helped us with CWD sampling through the years,” explains DNR wildlife biologist Terry Haindfield, who is coordinating the project. “A lot of them attended the public meetings last week, where we explained how the collection process would work. We want to see what is happening and the extent of the disease.”

Through the weekend, the DNR issued more than 60 scientific collectors permits, listing nearly 260 participants who were allowed multiple sample tags. Early participants this past weekend, brought harvested deer to the CWD collection site, or called wildlife workers to their locations, to collect lymph nodes and brain stems. Collecting on public land will cease when 50 deer samples have been obtained. Collection will cease when overall samples have reached 200...or March 15, which ever arrives first.

The samples will be tested at the National Veterinary Services Lab in Ames. As results are available, hunters will be notified. Any positive deer will be collected and disposed of by the DNR. Adult deer are being targeted, since the always fatal disease does not show up in testing until the animal is about 18 months old.

About one third of the area lies within Yellow River Forest. The public should be aware of the presence of hunting activity—and wear blaze orange clothing there--during the next couple weeks. Wildlife officials believe they have sufficient participants to reach their goal by March 15. In addition to those harvested, the public could report any road-killed deer to the DNR, for testing as well.

CWD is a neurological disease affecting primarily deer and elk. It is caused by an abnormal protein--a prion--that attacks the brains of infected animals, causing them to lose weight, display abnormal behavior and lose bodily functions. Signs include excessive salivation, thirst and urination, loss of appetite, progressive weight loss, listlessness and drooping ears and head. It is always fatal, when an animal contracts it. The additional data is important, to determine the next course of action to slow the disease spread in Iowa.

“With these individual confirmations here, we treat them as sparks, rather than as a wildfire at this time,” emphasizes Haindfield. “Many of the people involved were at the public meetings and understand what we are dealing with. That helps in the effort here, to delineate where this disease is and how to maybe curtail it at this level.”

**MEDIA CONTACT: DNR wildlife biologist Terry Haindfield, [563-380-3422](tel:563-380-3422) or DNR information specialist Joe Wilkinson [319-430-0325](tel:319-430-0325).**

## STATE OF THE LAKES - MACBRIDE, CORALVILLE

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Cram 90 anglers into a room, outline an upbeat forecast for fishing in nearby lakes; and you can—*almost*—watch for the boats to line up in the snow, at the ramp.

“Crappies on Lake Macbride look real good in the next few years. There is a huge year class coming on,” assessed DNR fisheries management biologist Paul Sleeper. “Those fish that were 5½ to 7 inches last spring, will be 8-9½ inches this year.”

His outlook—featured at the recent Cedar Rapids Sports Show—considered the good growth rate there. Though it gets fished hard, many anglers will toss back the smaller fish, waiting for the growth cycle to hit that keeper stage. “You’ll be catching these for the next three or four years,” forecast Sleeper.

And his outlook included adjacent Coralville Reservoir. “There will be a lot (of crappies) in the 10-11 inch range...and (a group behind them), coming off a good 2014 spring spawn,” notes Sleeper. “We had high water there in the spring. That spread out the fry as they hatched. This past fall, we saw a lot of 3 to 4 inch fish in population surveys off that 2014 hatch.”

Of course, with it’s up and down water level, the Reservoir does not provide stable fishing locations every time out. Rainfall through the basin of the Iowa River pushes up the lake level; sometimes overnight. That clouds water clarity and fishing success. As it drops, the changes in depth can push crappies out of a favorite brush pile or rock face along the shoreline into deeper water.

It is never a sure thing. These standing-room-only anglers who packed the room were looking for an edge.

“I’m pretty excited,” admitted Dan Morgan of Solon. “I had good luck last spring around the (Macbride) causeway, fishing for crappies. They are better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.” Having just moved to Solon, he sees a twice-a-week fishing habit developing. “Walleyes too; good size and numbers; I did pretty well last spring.”

Fishing partner Dave Phillips of Belle Plaine fished Macbride quite a bit; years ago. Since the 2002-03 Macbride lake renovation, he moved over to the Reservoir...and a few other area lakes. He is interested, though, in what he heard during Sleeper’s ‘state of the lakes’ forecast.

Sleeper covered more than crappies. With walleyes, wipers, largemouth and Kentucky spotted bass, bluegills, catfish...even muskellunge in the waters of Macbride and--with periodic flooding--the Reservoir, it’s truly a mixed bag.

**Bluegills?** One of the down spots. “There are a pile of them in Macbride; 5-6 ½ inchers, though. They compete with gizzard shad for the same food,” noted Sleeper, saying Macbride is not a target lake for big bluegills right now.

**Largemouth bass?** For daily and possession limits, Kentucky spotted bass, which make up about 40

percent of the black bass in Macbride, are combined. The last few years, anglers have been getting good bass catches. Last spring, there were a lot of bass 13, 14, 15 inches (They need to be 15, to keep).

On Coralville? "The last three, four years have been getting better for largemouths," said Sleeper. "Fishing toward the dam (lower) end of the Reservoir, not the upper end. A lot of larger ones are being seen."

**Walleyes?** Macbride enters Year 2 of a five year study of whether stocked fry or stocked 8-10 inch hatchery raised walleye do better in the lake. The larger fish are more expensive to raise but escape most predators which swallow up millions of tiny fry. Last year, clipping the left pectoral fin identified the larger, stocked walleyes. This year it'll be the right pectoral fin.

Night shocking on two occasions in April was carried out, with another one in November. Sleeper says quite a few of the fin-clipped larger fish showed up, but so did non-clipped—obviously grown up fry.

**Wipers?** The hybrid white/ocean striped bass often shows up twice the size of normal white bass. They do well guzzling down the seemingly endless gizzard shad populations in both Macbride and the Reservoir. With virtually no reproduction, wipers must be stocked year to year. They're also stocked at Pleasant Creek Lake.

**Muskies?** The top predator fish is also stocked at both Macbride and Pleasant Creek as 12-14 inch fish; at a rate of one per acre of water. A 47 inch, 30-pounder was landed last summer. Muskies also consume gizzard shad...but don't stop if it's a game fish going down their gullet.

High water in recent years gave muskies a free pass downstream. The big fish have found below the Burlington Street Bridge in Iowa City. To combat the escape route, a more permanent fence is on order for the top of the Macbride-to-Coralville Reservoir spillway.

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## NEW PADDLEFISH FISHING SEASON ON MISSOURI AND BIG SIOUX RIVERS OPENS MARCH 1

The new paddlefish fishing season opens March 1 on the Missouri and Big Sioux rivers and runs through April 15 (sunrise to sunset). Anglers fishing for paddlefish must have a valid Iowa fishing license, along with a special paddlefish license and unused transportation tag. The paddlefish license is required for snagging the Missouri and Big Sioux rivers and is limited to Iowa waters only.

Paddlefish are one of the largest freshwater fish in North America. The Iowa state record is 107 pounds and was caught on the Missouri River in 1981. They feed on microscopic organisms called zooplankton. Since they are filter feeders, they can't be caught with the traditional hook and bait. Snagging is the only efficient method of catching paddlefish.

Paddlefish prefer slower, deep water. Use a depth finder to scout pockets of deep water, or head to areas slightly downstream from wing dams. Paddlefish feed in the current coming off the end of the dam.

Use heavy weights, from one ounce up to 4 or 4-1/2 ounces, a medium-heavy to heavy rod at least six feet long and braided line of at least 50 pound test strength. Treble hooks can be no larger than 5/0 or measuring more than 1-1/4 inches in length when two hook points are placed on a ruler. A gaffe hook or other penetrating device cannot be used as an aid in landing a snagged fish.

The paddlefish slot limit on the Missouri River requiring the release of all 35-45 inch fish protects the primary breeding stock. Most of the fish harvested will probably be below the slot limit. To properly measure a paddlefish, use a flexible tape and measure along and over the center line contour of the fish while it is lying flat. All paddlefish measuring 35-45 inches from the front of the eye to the natural unaltered fork of the tail must immediately be released alive.

Immediately after being caught, the transportation tag issued with the license must be visibly attached to the fish's lower jaw. It is the angler's proof of possession of the carcass; it must be attached so it cannot be removed without mutilating or destroying the tag. The transportation tag must be attached before the carcass is moved in any manner from the place of harvest and remain affixed to the paddlefish until it is processed for consumption. The paddlefish shall remain intact except for the snout in front of the eye until the fish reaches the final processing place, defined as the angler's residence or the location where consumption occurs.

If you catch a jaw-tagged fish (numbered band in the lower jaw), call the phone number on the tag and report the tag number, date of capture, capture location and eye-to-fork length. The Iowa DNR and other state fisheries agencies tag paddlefish to better understand and manage populations. Tagging provides valuable information to estimate population size, fish movement and growth.

For more information about Iowa's new paddlefish season, visit the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

**MEDIA CONTACT: Van Sterner, Fisheries Management Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-249-1997.**

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## **TURKEY FEDERATION RECOGNIZES SOUTHERN IOWA CONSERVATION EFFORT**

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) presented its 2014 Iowa Conservation Partners Award to a the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Forestry and Wildlife bureaus, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program and the Southern Iowa Oak Savanna Alliance for its efforts to restore oak woodlands and oak savanna within the Stephens State Forest Bird Conservation Area (BCA).

"The success wouldn't likely have been possible without landowners in our target area who were willing participants," said Jim Coffey, forest species wildlife technician for the Iowa DNR. "Local DNR private lands technician Helga Offenburger and Stephens state forester Jessica Flatt played key roles in on the ground efforts of this restoration project."

The restoration effort targeted 220 private landowners in the BCA to improve the oak savanna ecology and management. The partnership held landowner workshops and forestry field days; held a prescribed burning training for local volunteer fire departments; restored 210 acres of oak savanna on private land and 64 acres on public land.

They conducted timber stand improvements on 36 acres of private land and 137 acres on public land, introduced prescribed fire to 257 acres of private land and 61 acres of public land and restored 15 acres of native prairie on private land and 18 acres on public land.

Forestry plans were written for 22 landowners covering more than 1,400 acres.

The NWTF presented Conservation Officer Jacob Fulk with its 2014 Conservation Officer of the Year award. Fulk is assigned to Appanoose and Monroe counties.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Coffey, Forest Species Wildlife Technician, Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [641-774-2958](tel:641-774-2958).**

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## **WEBSTER COUNTY WOMAN WINS BOW AS PART OF "HUNGER GAMES" PROMOTION**

Maddisen Heun, 24, of Dayton, won the Iowa Bowhunters Association (IBA) bow contest based on the letter she submitted after experiencing archery during an outdoor event. The contest was held in conjunction with the release of "Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1."

Heun wrote that she found the sport exciting and skillful and wanted to pursue the activity in the future. When she learned the bow she used was the same as the prize, she decided to enter the contest.

The IBA purchased the Matthews Genesis Bow valued at \$200 from Buck Hollow, in Pella.

"I developed a great deal of respect and admiration for bowhunters. Although it was only my first time, I do not want it to be my last," she wrote.

Heun was presented the bow on Feb. 18.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Donise Petersen, Outreach Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-205-8709](tel:515-205-8709).**

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**MICK KLEMESRUD** Information Specialist

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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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