



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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## Large group of paddlers fined for no life jackets on board their kayaks

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conservation officers cited dozens of paddlers on July 6 for no life jackets on board their kayaks.

The 300 plus paddlers, most in kayaks, some in inner tubes, were floating from the Puckerbrush Access to the Booneville Access on the Raccoon River. “It’s so important to have a life jacket on or at least available, as small paddling craft can easily tip and throw a paddler into the water,” reminds Nate Anderson, Iowa DNR conservation officer. “If you are sitting on the life jacket instead of wearing it, it won’t be there when you really need it.”

Safety incidents are on the rise among Iowa paddlers. Forty-seven percent of Iowa's 19 boating deaths from 2016 through 2018 were paddlers. Four paddlers, not wearing life jackets, died this year.

Iowa law requires a life jacket to be on board all canoes, kayaks and paddleboards. Children 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times when in a canoe, kayak or on a paddleboard.

“You should always wear your life jacket, regardless of your swimming ability or paddling experience,” said Todd Robertson, paddling instructor and Outreach Coordinator for Rivers Programs at the Iowa DNR. “This is super important when paddling on moving water, like a river, where changing currents and hazards can dump you into the river.”

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