



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 15, 2019

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Turin Wildlife Area is another Loess Hills treasure



Turin Wildlife Area in central Monona County is comprised of a mix of habitats – part Loess Hills, part Missouri River lowlands, part cool prairie remnant, part oak woodland. It's a place where threatened and endangered species live beside 200-inch legendary Iowa deer. And it's open to everyone to enjoy. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Turin, Iowa - Just north of the small town of Turin in central Monona County is a place where the threatened plains pocket mouse lives with legendary Iowa stags, rare plants and animals can be found, and volunteers come to help restore the landscape to more closely resemble what was here when western Iowa was settled.

Turin Wildlife Area is 1,100-acres of beautiful, rugged Iowa wilderness available for everyone to enjoy.

“It’s hard for some to imagine how easy access can be in the Loess Hills,” said Iowa Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist Doug Chafa. “Here at Turin, old farm fields in grass are right next to oak groves that are popular places for deer and turkeys, and for hunters. If there’s an open season for turkey in the spring, hunters will be in there. There’ll be four to five gobbles out there each day.”

Chafa has been working to restore the landscape on Turin and that starts with removing cedar trees and shade tolerant trees. The bulk of the work is done using a contractor with heavy equipment and then volunteers come in to clear areas the machines can’t reach.

“Sometimes it’s hard to understand why the DNR is cutting trees,” Chafa said. “In this case, we are working to promote oak regeneration and to do that the cedars and shade tolerant trees have to go.”

Oak trees provide habitat and a high value food source for all types of wildlife, from blue jays to turkeys and from squirrels to deer. “We’re not looking at the short term here, our goal is to have that oak resource 100 years from now,” he said. “It’s pretty amazing what pops up for diversity when we clear the ridge tops and hillsides of the cedars and deciduous trees.”

While Chafa is sympathetic to the hunters whose favorite treestand tree was cut down, he’s keeping his focus on the big picture – convert the ridge tops and slopes back into prairie.

The restoration is moving at a pace of about 10 acres per year using local ecotype seed including blazing star, pale coneflower, large-flowered penstemon, silverleaf scurfpea, skeletonweed, nine-anther dalea, yucca, New England aster, locoweed and more.

The focus of the prairie restoration was not necessarily to promote rare butterfly habitat – prairie violet is to the regal fritillary what milkweed is to the monarch – but the benefits are the same. Hiking up a ridge spine, Chafa grabs seed from one of the legumes on site. State Highway 175 is off in the distance.

“We don’t manage specifically for rare butterflies – regal fritillaries, otto skippers, monarchs – but they’re here,” he said.

So are the reptiles, like six-lined racerunners, bullsnakes, fox snakes, northern line snakes, DeKay’s brownsnake and hognose snake – a species of greatest conservation need.

At nearby Sylvan Runkel State Preserve, MJ Hatfield, prairie insect enthusiast, had found a previously unidentified insect species.

“That just puts the exclamation point on it, on protecting this area,” Chafa said.

Etcetera

- Turin Wildlife Area is on the migration corridor and part of the Loess Hills Bird Conservation Area. Raptors, shorebirds and songbirds can be seen passing

through each spring and fall. There's a pretty active Audubon Club in nearby Sioux City.

- A local hunter is focusing on hunting bobcats in the same way deer hunters focus on a trophy buck. He uses trail cameras to select which bobcat to pursue based on its spotting, patterns its behavior, and then plans his hunt based on that information. "If a person wants to see a bobcat, Turin is the best place to see one," Chafa said.
- A 220-acre section of Turin was dedicated as a biological and geological state preserve and serves as an excellent example of the unique "peak and saddle" topography of the 60- to 150-foot thick loess deposits that developed 14,000 to 30,000 years ago from windblown silt. Turin Loess Hills State Preserve became part of a National Natural Landmark in 1986.
- The Monona County Conservation Board manages the RT Reece Homestead Cabin for reservation that offers two bedrooms, heat and air, kitchen, TV and more. RT Reece was the original homesteader in Monona County and his son built the cabin. It's a popular stay during hunting seasons.

Media Contact: Doug Chafa, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-420-2437.

Sidebar: Turin Wildlife Area is an outdoor classroom



Whiting Community school teacher Phil Hubert brought 14 seventh graders to Turin Wildlife Area to collect plant seeds from an 80-acre prairie that would be used to increase prairie size at Turin and other nearby areas on a cool wet fall day in 2018.

Doug Chafa, wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural

Resources, challenged the students to see who could collect the most seeds. The students spent the better part of a school day picking seeds to fill seven ice cream buckets and had fun doing it.

"We explored a lot of it," said Koltyn Andersen, 14. "Get dirty once you're out there, you'll like it. I should've worn Muck boots because my feet got wet."

He and classmate Kash Paulsen, 13, both wore cowboy boots. "We're slipping and sliding down the hill," he said.

Cool drizzle and muddy conditions aside, both boys said they would do it again, which was what Chafa wanted to hear. "Now, the students are invested in the prairie," he said.

Hubert has been teaching for 30 years and said he continues to look for opportunities to get kids outdoors and away from TV, computers and their phones. His students have

also planted trees at a county park and participated in the Loess Hills prairie seminar. Last year was the first time he had arranged the seed collection.

Fall offers fantastic fishing – get out and enjoy it

Fall is a great time to catch fish with family and friends. The air is cool, the views are picturesque, lakes are less crowded and the fish are easy to catch. Make lasting memories together and put your worries behind you.

“Fantastic fishing opportunities await both new and expert anglers,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Bureau. “Enticing a fish to bite your hook is fun for all ages.”

Cooler temperatures and shorter daylight times trigger fish to actively search for food to build energy reserves to survive the long winter. These predictable movements make them easier to find.

“Yellow perch, muskies, crappies, walleyes, largemouth and smallmouth bass are more active in the fall,” explained Larscheid. “They eat more and more often to get ready for winter.”

The fall bite in lakes and ponds shifts to the main part of the day. Fish are more active during the day and will be close to shore. Target areas of a lake where the water is warmer, mostly in shallow water bays along the north shore.

“Use live bait, particularly minnows, small tackle and fish slowly when fishing in cooler water,” Larscheid said.

Look for panfish schools in open water near structure like a brush pile, underwater hump, drop-offs and rock reefs. Largemouth bass will be close to some type of structure like underwater brush piles, old road beds, rock reefs or weed lines.

Quickly find fish structure locations with the [online fishing atlas](#) or download structure location maps from the [DNR's Fishing Maps website](#).

Find tips for catching yellow perch, crappie, walleye, bass and catfish on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/fishing. Check the [weekly fishing report](#) to find out what is biting where.

Media Contact: Joe Larscheid, Chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-201-3376.

DNR to eliminate Gizzard Shad at Lake Sugema

KEOSAUQUA, Iowa - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will treat Lake Sugema on Oct. 29 (pending workable weather conditions) with a very low concentration

of rotenone to eliminate gizzard shad. If the treatment is postponed, it will be rescheduled for sometime with better weather conditions this fall.

Lake Sugema will be closed to all recreation on Oct. 29 and will reopen on Oct. 30. The public will not be allowed within the treatment zone while the rotenone is being applied.

This low treatment level, about 4 percent of the normal dosage, allows the DNR to specifically target the shad with few impacts to other game species. Rotenone, a natural pesticide derived from the roots of certain members of the bean family from South America, is a common tool that fisheries managers use to manage sport fish, improve water quality, and manage endangered species.

Anglers should not retrieve dead or dying fish; rotenone label guidelines do not allow for human consumption of treated fish.

Gizzard shad, an injurious species, were illegally introduced to Lake Sugema in 2015. The growing gizzard shad population has reduced game fish abundance and quality, decreased water quality and limited fishing activity for some species.

Media Contact: Mark Flammang, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-647-2406.

Fall community trout stockings start October 19

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will release between 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout at 19 locations across Iowa as part of its cool weather trout program that brings trout to areas that cannot support them during the summer.

The fall community trout stockings are a great place to take kids to catch their first fish. A small hook with a nightcrawler or corn under a small bobber or small simple spinners such as a panther martin or mepps is all you need to get in on the fun.

Bringing trout to cities and towns offers a “close to home” option for Iowans who might not travel to northeast Iowa to discover trout fishing. A family-friendly event is often paired with the stocking to help anglers have success and fun while fishing.

The popular program is supported by the sales of the trout fee. Anglers need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can purchase a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit.

2019 Fall Community Trout Stocking Schedule

Oct. 19, [Heritage Pond](#), Dubuque, 10 a.m.

Oct. 24, [Banner Lake \(South\)](#), Summerset State Park, Indianola, 11 a.m.

Oct. 24, [Terra Lake](#), Johnston, Noon

Oct. 24, [Kettlestone Common Ponds](#), Waukee, 2 p.m.
Oct. 25, [Sand Lake](#), Marshalltown, Noon
Oct. 25, [Ottumwa Park Pond](#), Ottumwa, 11 a.m.
Oct. 26, [Discovery Park](#), Muscatine, 10 a.m.
Oct. 26, [Wilson Lake](#), Fort Madison, Noon
Oct. 26, [Scharnberg Pond](#), Spencer, Noon
Oct. 31, [North Prairie Lake](#), Cedar Falls, Noon
Oct. 31, [Liberty Centre Pond](#), North Liberty, 11 a.m.
Oct. 31, [Big Lake](#), Council Bluffs, 2 p.m.
Nov. 1, [Moorland Pond](#), Fort Dodge, Noon
Nov. 1, [Prairie Park \(Cedar Bend\)](#), Cedar Rapids, 10 a.m.
Nov. 8, [Bacon Creek](#), Sioux City, 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 9, [Emma Young Pond](#), Clinton, 10:30 a.m.
Nov. 15, [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#), Ames, Noon
Nov. 15, [Lake Petocka](#), Bondurant, Noon
Nov. 27, [Blue Pit](#), Mason City, 11 a.m.

Find more information about trout fishing in community lakes and ponds on the [DNR trout fishing webpage](#).

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, regional fisheries supervisor, northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

Waterfowl hunters reminded of rules for hunting in flooded crop fields

Iowa's unusually wet spring and fall has created a unique situation in certain parts of the state where floodwaters are reaching crop fields and causing issues regarding what waterfowl hunters can and can't do in these areas.

According to federal regulations, hunters are allowed to hunt standing crops as well as flooded standing crops unless that field has been manipulated. Manipulation includes knocking down or clearing an area in the standing crops for ducks to land.

Manipulation also means if the crops were disked or mowed instead of being harvested, the crop field is considered baited and hunting is not allowed. Additionally, if the baited field is influencing waterfowl behavior, hunters must avoid hunting within that zone of influence.

Hunting is allowed in a crop field that has been harvested. Any manipulation other than harvest is considered baiting and hunting is not allowed.

Hunters are encouraged to use an abundance of caution when choosing a place to hunt to avoid hunting in a baited area. A complete list of federal baiting regulations is online at www.fws.gov/le/waterfowl-hunting-and-baiting.html

Iowa duck season reopened in the north zone on Oct. 12. The south duck zone reopens on Oct. 19. The Missouri River zone is open Oct. 12-18, and then Oct. 27-Dec. 17.

Iowa DNR to host open house about former Camp Tahigwa

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources State Parks Bureau will be hosting an open house to collect comments on future planning for the building site at the former Camp Tahigwa.

The open house is scheduled from 4:00 - 7:00 PM on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at the former Camp Tahigwa location at 318 Tahigwa Drive near Dorchester, Iowa.

For more information or for special accommodation, contact Yellow River State Forest at (563) 586-2254.