

Earthtones

Summer 2020

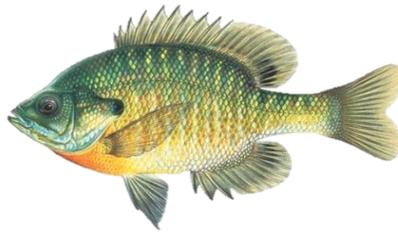
The Adventures of Taking a Kid Fishing: Tips for a Successful First Trip

Free fishing weekend in Iowa is the first full weekend in June. What better time to go fishing! Especially, if you have a kiddo in your life who has never been fishing before. One of the most heartbreaking moments I have had in my life was when one of my former youth group students asked me, "Why would I go fishing, when I can do it on my Wii?"

At that point, it became apparent to me that our society faces a serious problem. We, youth especially, have become disengaged from the outdoors. Some of my fondest memories as a child were from moments spent outside. Unless we help youth to discover a passion for the outdoors, they will never want to protect it. A good place to start is by taking them fishing!

When taking a kid fishing for the first time, there are several things to consider. First, set an example for kids by purchasing a fishing license. Anglers aged 16 or older **MUST** have a valid Iowa fishing license. Youth under the age of 16 fish for free. Licenses can be purchased online or from various retailers. Second, location is important. The goal for beginners is to catch fish. Choose a lake or pond that is well-stocked.

It is easy for kids to become discouraged or turned off from fishing, if they do not catch anything. Let that be a lesson for later on as they gain more experience. It would be wise to find a quiet spot near restrooms, be mindful of the forecast, and remember that fish bite better in the mornings when it is cooler. Third, you might be wondering what kind of pole or equipment works best for kids?



For beginners, simple, inexpensive gear is best. My first fishing pole was a kid's Snoopy pole from Walmart! There are all sorts of fun-themed fishing poles for kids these days! Who wouldn't want an Elsa from Frozen fishing pole? Most start with a spin-cast reel. Choose a pole that is about as tall as the kiddo you are taking fishing, and easy to hold. Most beginner fishing poles come with line, hooks, and bobbers. I also suggest leaving your pole at home, so you can focus all your attention on the child or children.

Next, it is important to talk about water safety with your kiddos. Make sure they are wearing a life jacket, even while fishing from shore. Talk about staying close to an adult at all times, and other general safety tips. It is also important to educate them about fishing pole and hook safety. Finally, establish emergency procedures. It is imperative they understand that fishing is a fun sport, but comes with responsibility.

Now that gear has been prepared, and the kids have been taught safety, you are ready to go fishing. The goal of the first fishing trip is to leave your children wanting more. Help them to get excited about fishing, so they will want to continue to fish. For example, a first fishing trip may only last a half hour to an hour. For older kids, it could last up to two hours.

Make sure to have a plan as to whether or not you will be practicing catch and release, or keeping any fish caught. Be aware of length limits. They can vary depending on fish species and the location of the body of water you are fishing at.
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Finally, make memories! Pack special snacks and drinks such as cold juice boxes, sports drinks, soda, or water! I do not know about you, but snacks are always necessary. In my family, deer sticks, and cheese and crackers are a must for any fishing trip. Take the opportunity to spend time with each other, have silly conversations, but do not forget to capture some pictures! Especially when they catch their first fish!

By: Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist



Fish Trivia

1. This fish species is mostly nocturnal, making them easiest to catch at night.
A. Perch B. Walleye
C. Bluegill D. White Crappie
2. Which of the following trout species is native to Iowa?
A. Brook Trout B. Rainbow Trout
C. Brown Trout D. A, B, and C
3. All of these fish have scales EXCEPT for:
A. Northern Pike B. Bass
C. Channel Catfish D. Black Crappie
4. True or False: Muskies can swim at speeds of 30 miles per hour.
5. This fish species is named after it's gill that is blue.
A. Green Sunfish B. Red Ear Sunfish
C. Bluegill D. White Crappie
6. This fish is known for their big mouth.
A. Smallmouth Bass B. Walleye
C. Largemouth Bass D. Northern Pike
7. I am solitary and highly territorial. You do not want to mess with me.
A. Muskie B. Flathead Catfish
C. Walleye D. Northern Pike

Choosing the Right

With summer quickly approaching, comes the thrill of getting out on the water! Whether you enjoy open water fishing, boating, kayaking and canoeing, paddle boarding, or swimming, it is imperative you choose the correct life jacket. Especially, for the young kiddos in your life! However, you are **NEVER** too old to wear a life jacket! Life jackets are a must for water safety but finding the right fit can be tricky! Here are some helpful tips on finding the right life jacket for you and your family.

Under Iowa law, any child under the age of 13 must wear a life jacket at all times on a vessel. This includes canoes, kayaks and paddleboards. The right-sized life jackets for kids is determined by their weight. For example, an infant-sized life jacket will fit little ones from 8 to 30 pounds. Child-sized life jackets will fit kids weighing 30 to 50 pounds. The youth size life jackets are appropriate for kids who weigh 50-90 pounds.



Adult life jacket sizes do not go by weight. Rather, they are determined by the chest size of the wearer. To figure out the correct fit, measure your chest at the broadest point, using those measurements and the life jackets' manufacturer's size recommendations to figure out which size fits best. For a better fit, women may want to purchase a gender-specific life jacket.



Once you think you have found the right size, loosen all the straps, put it on, zipping or buckling it. Tighten all of the straps, saving the shoulder straps for last. The life jacket should feel snug, like a glove, but not so tight it is uncomfortable. Have a friend or family member pull up on the shoulders of the life jacket. If it comes up past your nose and head, try tightening it further. It is too big if it still moves.

It is important to remember that under Iowa law, all vessels, including canoes, kayaks and paddleboards, must have at least one U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket per person on board. While those 13 years or older are not required to wear their life jacket, it is highly recommended we **ALL** wear our life jackets at all times, especially when moving. Be a floater, not a sinker!

By: Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist



Summer Calendar

The Washington County Conservation Board meets the second Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at the Conservation Education Center in Marr Park at 4:30 p.m.

Sat. August 15th & 16th **8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Hunter Education Classroom Course

Washington County Conservation will be sponsoring a FREE Hunter Education Classroom course on Saturday, August 15th and Sunday, August 16th. The first day will be spent in the classroom, while the second day will be a field day with live fire. Students must be 11 years old or older to attend. Please note, certificates do not become valid until their 12th birthday! **This event is pending, per CDC recommendations and Iowa DNR Hunter Education Program protocols.**



Sat. Sept. 19th **8:00 a.m.** **Marr Park**
Run Wild With WCCB

Join Washington County Conservation for a 5K run/walk! We will also have a fun run for kids! This race will be 3.1 miles through the primitive (off road) trails of Marr Park! Take a break from running on the pavement to enjoy a 100% trail run! Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers of each of our designated age categories. To register, visit the WCCB website. A registration form and race waiver will be available online.

Sat. October 17th **6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.** **Marr Park**
Halloween Hike

Join us for our annual Halloween Hike! This year's theme is "Become a Conservationist." Learn about conservation and why it is so important that we protect our natural resources. Specifically, we will be exploring the different habitat types in Iowa, and their importance to our environment. We will also learn about the impact that humans have on the environment. There will be activities along the way! Refreshments will be served at the nature center following the hike.

Washington County Conservation Board

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Cody Smith, Ranger/Technician
Brett Johnson, Ranger/Technician

Washington County Conservation Board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at the Conservation Education Center. Visitors are welcome.

The WCCB is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in larger print, please contact our office.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Paddling Safety

With our world fighting a pandemic, there has been an increase in activity outdoors. In particular, the number of canoers and kayakers utilizing our county and state parks has increased; I have seen this firsthand. Whether you are a new or experienced paddler, there are several things to keep in mind in order to make your first or next trip out a safe and fun experience!

1. Learn the basic paddling strokes and operation of a vessel, or refresh your skills before going out! For beginners, start with a small pond or lake.
2. Always wear your life jacket, even if you do not think you need it!
3. Never go out on flooded rivers or fast moving, rain swollen streams.
4. Do not paddle alone, and have a float plan before you head out. Tell others of the plan.
5. Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature. Water temperatures are usually lower than the air. Take a dry bag with extra clothing. Wear proper shoes, not flip flops.
6. Learn the river hazards, and how to avoid them. Stay away from strainers, and wood or branch piles that can pull a paddler under.
7. Pack a mini first aid kit, in case of minor injuries.

I hope that all of you will take the opportunity to get out on the water this summer and will keep these tips in mind! If you prefer not to paddle on the river, we have several recreation areas that make excellent paddling spots! Marr Park in particular has two ponds perfect for beginners but would also be enjoyable for experienced paddlers as well!

Fish Trivia Answers

1. B- Walleye
2. A- Brook Trout
3. C- Channel Catfish
4. True
5. C- Bluegill
6. C- Largemouth Bass
7. D- Northern Pike

Extreme S'Mores

Going camping this summer? Or starting a bonfire? Try these variations of a classic s'more!

Instead of Graham Crackers, try:

Chocolate covered graham crackers
Cinnamon graham crackers
Salty crackers
Fudge striped cookies
Oatmeal cookies
Chocolate chip cookies
Wafer-style cookies
Toasted bread



Instead of a chocolate bar, try:

Peanut butter cups
Dark chocolate with strawberry slices
Mint chocolate
Cookies and cream chocolate bar
Caramels
Hazelnut cocoa spread

Try some add-ons:

Peanut butter
Jam
Cream cheese
Banana or apple slices
Caramel sauce
Hot fudge
Sprinkles



WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
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AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

**Summer
Center Hours**

Tuesday-Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday-Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Closed
Sunday-Monday

Hunter Education Classroom Course

Washington County Conservation is proud to be sponsoring a summer Hunter Education Classroom course on Saturday, August 15th and Sunday, August 16th, at the Conservation Education Center.

Are you a hunter? If not, have you ever thought about going hunting? Are you a youth or adult who has tagged along with family or friends and is ready to seek your first harvest? If so, Iowa law requires anyone born after January 1, 1972, to become hunter education certified, before they are eligible to purchase an Iowa hunting license.

Hunter education is a program designed to introduce students to life-long skills that are important to many different types of outdoor recreational opportunities. Students will learn basic survival and first aid skills, water safety, wildlife identification, and

the basics of wildlife management, hunting laws, and firearm/archery safety. Hunter education also stresses the importance of individual responsibility and outdoor ethics.

The first day will be spent in the classroom, following the curriculum. It will also include a laws talk presented by a local Conservation Officer. The second day will be a field day following a review and completion of the exam. The field day will involve live fire and a safety trail. Sign up at the Iowa DNR website under *Hunter Education*.

Students must be 11 years or older to attend unaccompanied by an adult. Please note, certificates do not become valid until their 12th birthday. For more information, please call 319-657-2400, or email wecbnaturalist2@gmail.com.