

Earthtones

Autumn 2020

Tips for a Safe and Successful Hunting Season

Hunting season officially kicks off in Iowa on September 1st, with the opening day of dove and teal season. While most of us have probably completed hunter education, it is still important to include a review of safety, and rules and regulations, in preparations for any hunting season. In this article, we will explore some tips for a safe and successful hunting season! First and foremost, anyone 16 years of age or older, must purchase a hunting license.

In Iowa, the White-tailed Deer is the most popular species to hunt. Whether hunting with a rifle, shotgun, or bow, there are some safety measures to consider. First, always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Second, treat every weapon with respect, and as if it is loaded. This includes knocked arrows on a bow. Third, know your target and what is in front of it and beyond it. Finally, keep your finger outside of the trigger guard or release, until ready to shoot.

This may seem like common sense to most of us, but of the four main causes of hunting incidents, hunter judgement mistakes results in the majority of all hunting incidents. It is also important to note that accidents are caused by people of all ages. Moreover, most of us hunt with friends and family. The last thing we want to do is cause injury or death to a loved one because of a judgement error.

If hunting from a tree stand, wear appropriate safety equipment such as a safety harness, and check all straps. If hunting during any of the gun seasons in Iowa, a 100% blaze orange vest is required. Do not load your gun or knock an arrow until you have made it to your hunting spot, whether that be in a blind or tree stand. Use a haul line to hoist your weapon up into your tree stand.

Finally, it is important to be aware of the rules and regulations surrounding deer. Purchase the proper tags for the season you have chosen to hunt. Know the difference between a male and a female deer. It is also important to know where you can legally hunt deer, whether that be on private or public ground.

Waterfowl and Upland bird hunting are also popular seasons hunted by many in Iowa. Whether hunting doves, pheasants, geese, ducks, or turkeys, there are safety tips we should all keep in mind before going out. First, be courteous and careful when hunting near other hunters, especially on public areas. Second, do not set up too close to other groups.

Third, while blaze orange is not required for waterfowl or turkey hunting, wear an orange cap while walking to and from the field. However, at least a cap with 50% blaze orange is required for pheasant hunting. Fourth, do not load firearms until at your hunting site. Lastly, just like with deer hunting, always be aware of what is beyond a bird before you shoot. It is important to also be educated on the laws surrounding bird hunting. For example, purchase proper licensing, such as the migratory bird stamp.

Furthermore, it is critical that you know how to correctly identify the bird species you are hunting. Ducks in particular have similar features among the different species. Be sure to know the difference between male and female birds as well. This ensures that what you shoot is legal to harvest. Whether hunting in a group or near others, be aware of your zone of fire and target fixation.

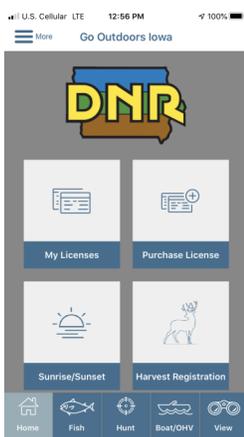
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Finally, no matter what season you are hunting, it is important to develop a hunting plan. Your plan includes the location you plan to hunt, and with whom. You may include a map with specific directions on how you plan to get to your spot, or spots if hunting in a group. Make sure that you give your plan to a responsible family member or friend.

Whether hunting deer season, waterfowl, or upland bird season, there are some general tips responsible and ethical hunters should keep in mind before going hunting. Aforementioned, understand the rules and regulations set in place. Keep in mind that being an ethical hunter is doing the right thing when no one is watching, even when doing the wrong thing is legal.

Respect the natural resources, other hunters, private landowners, and non-hunters. Leave the land better than you found it, practice shooting prior to your hunt to ensure a quick, clean kill. Refrain from interfering with another's hunt. Ask landowners for permission to hunt. Transport animals discreetly and maintain a presentable appearance while on the street. This means no bloody clothing. Being a responsible, safe and ethical hunter is critical to the continuation of the hunting tradition in Iowa.

With that being said, I wish all of you the best of luck with the 2020-2021 hunting season! Be safe out there! We would love to see photos of successful hunts taken on any of our public hunting areas! Download the Go Outdoors Iowa! app for more information about hunting and fishing in Iowa!



By: Megan Jorgensen,
Naturalist

Public Hunting Areas in Washington County

English River Access: 14 acres, deer, turkey, squirrel, and waterfowl hunting.

English River Wildlife Area: 782 acres.

IHAP (Iowa Hunting & Access Program): 76 acres, deer, pheasant, quail, and dove.

Clemons Creek Wildlife Area: 317 acres.

Rubio Wildlife Area: 98 acres.

Rubio Access: 643 acres, deer, turkey, squirrel.

McKain's Access: 11 acres.

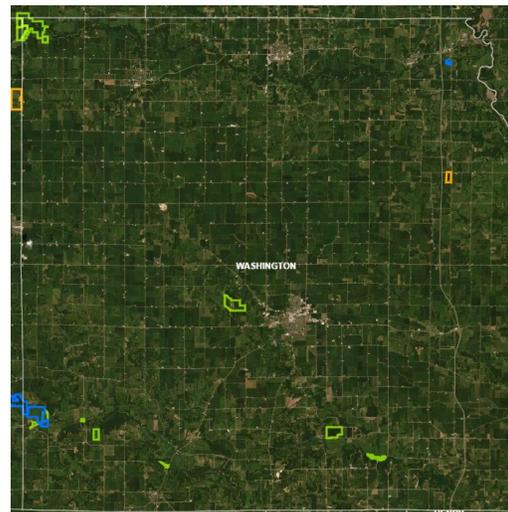
Schmitter Heritage Area: 77 acres.

Brighton Access: 18 acres.

Sockum Ridge Park: 224 acres.

Fern Cliff: 52 acres

*Check out the Iowa DNR's Public Hunting Atlas to view these on the Iowa map—> Washington County.



Clemons Creek Shooting Range Updates

The Clemons Creek Shooting Range lies within the 317 acre Clemons Creek Wildlife & Recreation Area, and is just one of the 17 properties that are managed by the Washington County Conservation Board. The recreation area is located approximately one mile west of Washington on the corner of Kiwi Avenue and 242nd St., and offers a wide variety of outdoor recreation.

The focal point of Clemons Creek Wildlife & Recreation Area, is the public firearms and archery shooting ranges. Both ranges are located on the south side of Clemons Creek along 242nd St. The firearms range consists of 25-yard, 50-yard, and 100-yard shooting lanes, as well as a skeet shooting area.

In the last two years, the conservation board has made tremendous improvements to the shooting range, which have attracted more users than ever. Each shooting lane has been updated with pavilions to provide shade, seating, and benches for users. The backstop on each shooting lane has been switched from wooden pallets to rubber matting that provide more target stability and require far less maintenance. Improvements will continue on the shooting range, with the next point of focus being the clay target shooting area.

If you would like to utilize the shooting range, please contact the Washington County Conservation Board to set up an appointment to obtain your range certification. The certification process only takes about fifteen minutes. Once completed, you will receive a range certification card, which is good for life.

By: Cody Smith,
Ranger



Environmental Education Updates

With summer coming to a close, I wanted to take the opportunity to provide everyone with an environmental education program update. In July, we were given the opportunity to offer summer camp to three different age groups: 1st and 2nd graders, 3rd and 4th graders, and 5th- 7th graders.

All three camps were incredibly successful, and we received a lot of awesome feedback. It was fun to interact with kids again after months of quarantine. We definitely missed hearing laughter in the nature center. The kids undoubtedly left an impression. It is my hope that they left camp with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for our natural resources.

Apart from summer camps, we have been able to provide opportunities for our younger kids, with the start of Toddler Time. This program is for kids pre-kindergarten and younger. We meet the first Wednesday of every month from 9:30-11:00 AM. We have also started hosting movie nights once a month at the park. Our next showing is Saturday, September 12th at 8:00 PM! We will be showing the original Lion King.

With continued uncertainty surrounding the 2020-2021 school year, programming is going to look a lot different than usual. While a majority of the school districts have returned full time, they are not allowing visitors. As you can imagine, this is sad news.

However, with every situation, we are going to adapt and find ways to continue delivering environmental education to the county.

With that being said, if your family or friends are interested in programming, we would be happy to schedule sessions with you at Marr Park or at any of our public management areas. Please give us a call at 319-657-2400 or email me at wccbnaturalst2@gmail.com. We hope to hear from you!

By: Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist

Autumn 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. September 12th 8:00 p.m. Mary Marr Lodge
Movie Night at the Park

Join us at the lodge for a family friendly movie night! The movie starts at 8:00 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets, and your favorite snacks and drinks. The movie is the Lion King!

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

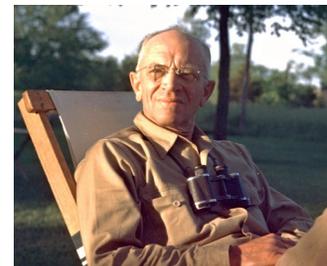
Join Washington County Conservation for a 5K run/walk! This race will be 3.1 miles through the primitive (off road) trails of Marr Park! A registration form and race waiver will be available online.

Wed. Oct. 7th 9:30 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. CEC
Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation Education Center for Toddler Time. This is a monthly program designed for kids pre-kindergarten and younger. This month, we will be learning all about Owls!

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. Following the hike, join us at shelter #3 for a Halloween themed family movie night! If there is inclement weather, the movie will be cancelled due to the inability to social distance inside the nature center. Halloweentown will be the movie!



Washington County Conservation Board

Office: 319/657-2400

Fax: 319/657-2500

E-mail: wscountyconservation@gmail.com

Website: co.washington.ia.us

Members: Craig Capps
Bill Nickell
Barb Donkersloot
Stan Stoops
Kim Prier

Staff: Zach Rozmus, Exec. Director
Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist
Randi Brase, Naturalist Asst.
Fritz Engel, Maint. Supervisor
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.

Wed. Nov. 4th **9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** **CEC**
Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation Education Center for Toddler Time. This month, we will be learning about turtles!

Sat. Nov. 14th **7:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Movie Night at the Park

Join us at the Conservation Education Center for a family friendly movie night! The movie starts at 7:00 p.m. Bring your own snacks and drinks! The movie is Brave!

Wed. Dec. 2nd **9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** **CEC**
Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation Education Center for Toddler Time. This month, we will be learning about wolves!

Sat. Dec. 5th **1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Holiday at the Conservation Center

Join us for our second annual ornament decorating event at the center. We will be creating ornaments from natural materials. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served.



Sat. Dec. 12th **7:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Movie Night at the Park

Join us at the Conservation Education Center for a family friendly movie night! The movie will start at 7:00 p.m. You are welcome to bring snacks and drinks! The movie will be The Santa Clause.

If you have questions or concerns about any of these events, please give us a call at the nature center at 319-657-2400.

Venison Fajitas

Ingredients:

- 6 tbsps. vegetable oil
- 1.5 lbs. of venison steak sliced thin in 4 inch strips
- 1.5 tbsps. McCormick Grill Mate Steak Seasoning
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 medium onions, sliced in quarters
- 2 red or green bell peppers
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 jalapenos, sliced (optional)
- 1 lime

Directions:

- In a large bowl, toss together venison, salt, and steak seasoning. Set in fridge for 1 hour.
- Heat 3 or 4 tbsps. of oil in a large skillet.
- Add the venison. Cook thoroughly.
- Remove venison to a platter.
- Add 2 or 3 tbsps. oil and heat.
- Add onions, pepper, tomatoes, garlic, and jalapenos. Cook until tender.
- Squeeze lime juice and stir.
- Serve with warm flour tortillas and traditional fajita toppings.



WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

Autumn
Center Hours
Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closed
Saturday-Sunday

Halloween Hike: “Become a Conservationist.”

Washington County Conservation is proud to present our annual Halloween Hike. This year’s theme is “Become a Conservationist.” We will be learning all about conservation and why it is important that we protect our natural resources.

In particular, we will be learning about the basic needs of wildlife and the different types of habitat we have in Iowa. We will also learn how to correctly identify some of Iowa’s wildlife, explore their habitats, and learn some fun facts about them. Finally, we will learn about our impact on nature and some of the things we can do to help protect it!

In order to maintain proper social distancing, only one family at a time will be allowed at each of the four stations. Please give us a call at 319-657-2400, or email our naturalist at wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com with questions or concerns.

Special Thanks

Unfortunately due to the pandemic the WCCB was forced to cancel its yearly Annual Report Cookout that is normally scheduled in August of every year. The event was created as a small giveback to all those who have provided support to the conservation board over the years. Although the event was cancelled I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed and continue to contribute to our efforts. Our job would not be possible without the continued support from each of you. The WCCB looks forward to once again hosting the event in August of 2021.

Thank you and stay safe
Zach Rozmus
Executive Director