



Inside Illinois DNR

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In This Issue

- Chronic wasting disease
- Youth turkey hunters set harvest record
- Handling wild animals
- Waterfowl open house meetings

Find Out More

DNR Home Page

Natural Resources

Parks and Recreation

Mines and Minerals

Hunting and Trapping

Fishing

Education/Outreach

Safety and Rules

Online Services

IDNR Careers

IDNR offers a wide array of professional careers in the conservation and natural resource arena. **Click here** to see the job openings available.

www.dnr.illinois.gov

Message from Director Natalie Phelps Finnie



Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial beginning of the summer boating season, and I want to remind everyone to be safe anytime they're on or near the water, whether it's boating, fishing, kayaking, or other water-centered activities. This year, National Safe Boating Week is May 17-23. Did you know the Illinois Department of Natural Resources offers boating safety education classes throughout the year? Anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1998, must have a valid Boating Safety Certificate, but the program is excellent for boaters of any age. Go online to learn more about [the program](#).

Whenever you recreate on or near the water, it's important to remember these [important safety tips](#):

- **Always wear a life jacket.** Be sure to have the type of life jacket that's appropriate for the activity you're doing, whether it's floating, kayaking, water skiing or fishing. Not only is it a good idea, it's also the law. Illinois requires that personal flotation devices, or PFDs, be available for each person aboard a boat or other watercraft. Illinois also requires everyone to wear a PFD while operating a personal watercraft or jet ski.
- **Never operate a boat while under the influence.** Boating accidents often involve impaired operators. The Illinois Conservation Police strictly enforce laws for operating under the influence on Illinois lakes and rivers.

Always make safety a priority while on the water and be sure to get out there and enjoy all the great water recreation Illinois has to offer this season.



DNR in the News

[Youth turkey hunters break Illinois harvest record](#)

[CWD detected in four Illinois counties](#)

[2024-2025 deer report gives insight into season](#)

[IDNR reminds the public not to touch wildlife](#)

Statewide Offices

Springfield, IL
217-782-6302

Bartlett, IL
847-608-3100

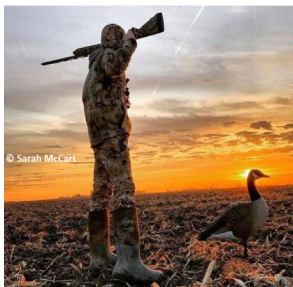
Benton, IL
618-435-8138

Highlights



CWD detected in four new Illinois counties

[Chronic wasting disease](#) was discovered in Adams, Marshall, Peoria, and Putnam counties, expanding the geographic presence of the disease in free ranging deer populations in northern Illinois.



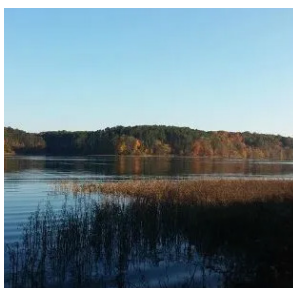
IDNR invites waterfowl hunters to statewide open house meetings

IDNR is seeking the input of Illinois waterfowl hunters for upcoming seasons. [Public open houses](#) contribute feedback on issues related to waterfowl hunting, including waterfowl hunting zones and future waterfowl season dates.



Go off-road at Sahara Woods State Recreation Area

The [off-highway vehicle trail](#) at Sahara Woods State Recreation Area in Saline County opens May 2. Enjoy nearly 30 miles of trails for your riding enjoyment. Go online to sign the waiver, register, and for additional information.



Fish salvage declaration issued for Little Grassy Lake

IDNR issued a [fish salvage declaration](#) at Little Grassy Lake in Williamson County due to a site renovation project. The 1,000-acre lake is operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fish can be salvaged from the lake through April 1, 2026.

Highlights



Join the IDNR team!

IDNR has many seasonal job opportunities at Illinois state parks and historic sites. [Go online](#) or follow IDNR on [LinkedIn](#) for additional information.



Illinois youth turkey season concludes record harvested

The [2025 youth turkey season](#) resulted in a preliminary recorded total of 2,091 birds harvested.



Visit Lewis and Clark State Historic Site for Point of Departure Commemoration

The Lewis and Clark State Historic Site will commemorate the 221st anniversary of the start of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with the annual [Point of Departure Commemoration](#) May 10 and 11. Visitors can interact with military demonstrators, historic artisans, and hands-on history displays at this free event, which takes place 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days.



Register now for the youth and family wingshooting clinic at Jim Edgar Panther Creek

Youth aged 10 and older and adults can now register online for the [youth and family wingshooting clinic](#) scheduled for 10 a.m. on Sunday, June 8 at Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area in Cass County. The clinic is for beginner and novice participants youth and adults of all skill levels. Parent or guardian participation is welcome and encouraged. Registration is required and there is a fee of \$10 per participant.





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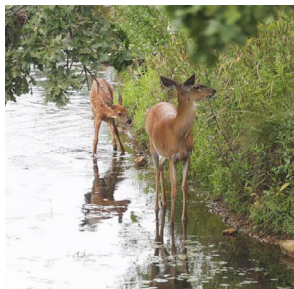
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Highlights



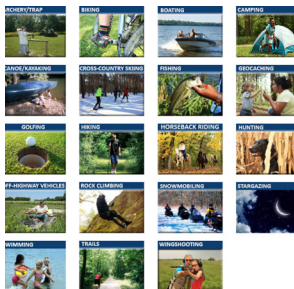
Baldwin Lake debuts new fish cleaning station

The Baldwin Lake boat ramp at Kaskaskia River State Fish and Wildlife Area in Randolph County now has a state-of-the-art [fish cleaning station](#) for anglers. The station is open daily 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.



IDNR issues reminder to avoid handling wild animals and birds

As spring sets in and more people head outside, IDNR is reminding everyone to leave baby birds and young [animals alone](#) when they encounter them in the wild.



Visit Illinois state parks

The public is welcome to pick out their piece of Illinois' natural beauty and see why Illinois state parks are truly great. [Plan a trip](#) to hike, bike, fish, or camp today.



Learn more about boating in Illinois

Visit the [Boating in Illinois](#) website to answer all your watercraft questions, such as how to register or renew a boat, boating regulations, and watercraft frequently asked questions.



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Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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