

More access and spring turkey hunting opportunities added to Illinois Recreational Access Program

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Youth hunters should apply by Feb. 26 for Youth Turkey Season; first-time adult and young hunters apply by March 10 for Seasons 3 and 4



SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) has added first-time adult turkey hunting to its growing list of public access activities. A first-time adult hunter includes anyone who hasn't hunted turkey in the past five years. In addition, the

IDNR has changed the age restrictions for youth turkey hunting to 17 years and younger. This will allow IRAP to permit more young turkey hunters on youth turkey hunting sites.

IRAP is a public access program that leases property from private landowners throughout Illinois and makes it available to registered IRAP participants for specific activities, including:

Spring youth turkey hunting for youth season and seasons three and four
First-time adult turkey hunting for seasons 3 and 4
Pond and riverbank fishing
Boat access on public waterways
Hiking, birding and outdoor photography
Archery deer hunting
Small game hunting
Waterfowl hunting

To apply for an IRAP spring turkey hunting site, hunters must go to IRAP website and download an application and liability waiver, complete and sign those forms and mail them to IDNR.

Deadlines for applications are February 26 for youth turkey season and March 10 for regular spring turkey seasons 3 and 4. In order to apply for seasons 3 and 4, applicants must first apply for a turkey permit through IDNR spring turkey lottery system.

“The Illinois Recreational Access Program is an innovative way for us to partner with private landowners to provide much-needed access for hunting and other outdoor activities,” said IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal. “In exchange for a small lease payment, landowners allow public access to their property. In addition, landowners receive assistance with habitat restoration of their property. IRAP is an ideal public/private partnership that provides positive results for everyone.”

Applicants applying for Youth Turkey Season through IRAP can download an application at: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP/Pages/YouthTurkeyHunting.aspx> .

For first-time adult turkey hunters applying for an IRAP site, go to <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP/Pages/First-time-Adult-turkey-hunting-.aspx> and download an application and liability waiver. All applications must be returned to IDNR four weeks prior to hunting season. Successful applicants will be notified by mail of their hunting site location, be given a map, and an IRAP permit allowing them to hunt on their assigned turkey hunting site. For youth turkey season, young hunters will also need to get an over-the-counter IDNR youth turkey permit once they receive their IRAP permit packet.

Youth and first-time adult hunters applying for an IRAP site for regular spring turkey seasons 3 or 4 will need to apply online for an IDNR turkey permit as soon as possible. The application deadline for the next lottery drawing for 2016 spring turkey permits is February 6. Successful applicants receiving a turkey permit for their choice county in season 3 or 4 will then need to send in an IRAP turkey application. IRAP sites for turkey seasons 3 and 4 are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Turkey hunting on IRAP-leased property is available during three spring turkey seasons:

Youth Season: **March 26-27** (*south zone*) **April 2-3** (*north zone*)

Third Season: **April 5-20** (*south zone*) **April 22-27** (*north zone*)

Fourth Season: **April 21-27** (*south zone*) **April 28-May 4** (*north zone*)

To date, IRAP has leased more than 12,000 acres in 29 counties to provide for public access opportunities. For more information, visit: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP/Pages/default.aspx> or e-mail Tammy Miller at Tammy.Miller@illinois.gov.