

IDNR announces summer urban fishing clinics

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Clinics provide free instruction and fun for kids

SPRINGFIELD – Learning how to fish is fun, easy and free for youngsters and families throughout Illinois this summer thanks to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban Fishing Program. Free fishing clinics are scheduled at 20 sites throughout the state.

“Fishing is a great way for families to spend time together outdoors, and our urban fishing clinics give thousands of young people each summer a chance to experience the fun of fishing,” said Dan Stephenson, chief of the IDNR Division of Fisheries.

The free Urban Fishing Program clinics are targeted toward children ages 16 and younger, but anyone interested in learning basic fishing techniques may attend.

Fishing clinic instructors present information on fish and other aquatic life, rules and regulations for fishing, as well as basic instruction on baiting a hook, tying a knot, casting, important tactics on how to catch fish, fishing ethics, and how to handle and return fish to the water. As part of each clinic, participants are provided with rods, reels, bait and tackle for 90 minutes of catch-and-release fishing.

Urban Fishing clinics are presented on weekdays, usually with morning and afternoon sessions. Locations and reservation/contact phone numbers for the clinics are below (check with the locations for local schedules):

- Riverside Park in Moline or Butterworth Pond in East Moline – 815-625-2903
- Glen Oak Park in Peoria – 309-688-3667 ext. 208
- Crystal Lake Park in Urbana – 217-367-1544
- Fairview Park in Decatur – 217-422-5911
- Washington Park in Springfield – 217-546-3970
- Frank Holten State Park in East St. Louis -- 618-874-7920 or 618-250-2446
- **Gordon Moore Park in Alton – 618-917-6296**
- Evergreen Park Lake in Carbondale – 217-415-0043
- Veteran’s Park in Mt. Vernon (June) – 618-242-6890 or 618-314-0437
- Foundation Park in Centralia (July) – 618-532-4311 or 618-314-0437
- Chicago Park District/IDNR Urban Fishing Clinics – 312-771-9741 (parks include: Gompers, Marquette, Columbus, Douglas, Humboldt, Jackson, McKinley, Sherman, and Washington Parks in Chicago)

The Illinois Urban Fishing Program was introduced in 1985 to teach individuals of all ages to fish, to provide better local fishing opportunities, and to give participants an understanding of and a greater appreciation for natural resources. Urban Fishing Program coordinators also hold non-fishing conservation education programs and visit schools during the fall, winter, and spring to teach and promote fishing and the appreciation of natural resources.

Last year, the Urban Fishing Program's coordinators, summer interns, and a network of fisheries volunteers, conducted or sponsored a total of 1,681 fishing and non-fishing programs for nearly 80,000 participants.

For more information on fishing in Illinois, call the IDNR Division of Fisheries at 217-782-6424 or check the website at www.ifishillinois.org.