

IDNR offers 2019 spring turkey hunting on private property through the IRAP public access program

November 28 2018 4:17 PM

SPRINGFIELD – Youth and adult hunters can now apply for 2019 Spring Turkey Hunting opportunities through the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP).

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has leased about 15,000 acres of private land on more than 170 sites in 39 counties for 2019 spring turkey hunting. Public access on the hunting sites is available free of charge for the two-weekend youth season, which will be held on March 30-31 and April 6-7, 2019.

Individuals must be under 18 years of age to participate as a youth hunter. To be eligible for the youth drawing, individuals must fill out an IRAP application and return it by February 26, 2019.

Another 344 sites are available for 2019 Illinois Spring Turkey Season segments 3 and 4 to youth and adult turkey hunters. These sites are open on a first-come, first-served basis. To be eligible, a hunter must first apply for his or her spring turkey permit through the IDNR lottery for an IRAP-eligible county (see map on IRAP website). Once a hunter receives a spring turkey permit, she or he may apply for an IRAP turkey site in the county for which they received their permit. Preference is given to youth hunters and first-time adult hunters. The IDNR spring turkey permit first lottery application deadline is December 1, 2018. Applications for the second lottery drawing for spring turkey permits will be accepted from December 4, 2018-January 11, 2019. IDNR spring turkey hunting information can be found at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/TurkeyHunting.aspx>

“The Illinois Recreational Access Program has been tremendously successful in obtaining private property for access by hunters. We’ve seen thousands of hunters apply for a hunting site on IRAP leased property,” said IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for us to partner with private landowners to provide for much-needed access for hunting and other outdoor activities. Landowners allow public access to their property in exchange for a minimal lease payment, a habitat management plan, and assistance with habitat restoration of their property. It is an ideal public/private partnership that delivers positive results for everyone.”

Applications for IRAP turkey hunting sites can be found online at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP/Pages/First-time-Adult-turkey-hunting-.aspx>.

Successful applicants will be notified by mail regarding the location of their hunting site, and they will be given a map and an IRAP site permit allowing them to hunt on their assigned privately-owned turkey hunting site. For youth season, hunters will also need to purchase an over-the-counter IDNR youth turkey permit *after* they have received their IRAP site permit packet.

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

Youth Season: **March 30 - 31**(*statewide*) and **April 6 - 7**(*statewide*)

Third Season: **April 19-24** (*south zone*); **April 26 - May 1**(*north zone*)

Fourth Season: **April 25-May 1**(*south zone*); **May 2 - 8**(*north zone*)

The IRAP program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. To date, IRAP has leased more than 19,000 acres in 46 counties to provide for various public access opportunities such as turkey, archery deer, small game, waterfowl, and upland bird hunting; pond and riverbank fishing; boat access on public waterways; and, access for hiking, birding and outdoor photography.

For more information, visit: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP/Pages/default.aspx> or e-mail dnr.irap@illinois.gov