



Illinois  
Department of  
**Natural  
Resources**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **December Newsbits from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources**

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is sharing the following upcoming events and noteworthy items for December.

**Dec. 1 – Jan. 31**

**Gnome Roam**

**Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

Search the trails at Giant City State Park for hidden gnomes. Complete the challenge and earn a special Giant City Gnome Roam patch. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook for more information.

**Dec. 4-7**

**Second firearm deer hunting season**

Statewide

Learn more about [deer hunting](#) in Illinois, including regulations, requirements and locations on the HuntIllinois.org calendar.

**Dec. 6**

**Holiday wreath-making workshop**

**Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site**

Lerna | Coles County

Participants in this beginner-level workshop will create a festive holiday wreath that will last through Christmas. A variety of greenery, ribbons and natural decorative elements will be available to create unique and interesting designs. Register [online](#).

**Dec. 6**

**Holiday wreath-making workshop**

**Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

Make your own holiday wreath using foraged materials like evergreen branches, pinecones, dried plants, and more. Register by calling 618-457-4836. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook for more information.

**Dec. 6**

**Christmas at the Fort**

**Apple River Fort State Historic Site**

Elizabeth | Jo Daviess County

Participants will step back in time to a German Christmas, complete with décor, toys, games and marzipan. Learn more on [Facebook](#).

**Dec. 6-7**

**Julmarknad Christmas Market  
Bishop Hill State Historic Site**

Bishop Hill | Henry County

Swedish Christmas time is in full swing in Bishop Hill. Explore this historic village and enjoy seasonal Swedish foods, music, gifts and traditions. Visit the Bishop Hill State Historic Site [calendar](#) for details.

**Dec. 6, 13 and 20**

**Santa Saturdays**

**Old State Capitol State Historic Site**

Springfield | Sangamon County

Meet Santa Claus at the Old State Capitol State Historic Site on Saturdays in December. Learn more on the [Springfield state historic sites](#) Facebook page.

**Dec. 6, 13, 20**

**Holiday open house tours**

**Dana-Thomas House and Vachel Lindsay Home state historic sites**

Springfield | Sangamon County

Tour these historic homes trimmed in holiday decorations. The homes will be open to the public from 1-4 p.m. Dec. 6, 13 and 20. Learn more on the [Springfield state historic sites](#) Facebook page.

**Dec. 7**

**Nature's Make and Take Series: Bees Wax Lip Balm**

**Starved Rock State Park**

Oglesby | LaSalle County

Discover the art of crafting your own natural lip balm for the winter season. It's a fantastic idea for a stocking stuffer or a delightful winter break project to enjoy at home. Visit the [Starved Rock calendar](#) online for additional information.

**Dec. 8-30**

**Annual photography show**

**Starved Rock State Park**

Oglesby | LaSalle County

The public is invited to view stunning images of nature captured by local photographers. The exhibition will be available throughout December. Visit the [Starved Rock calendar](#) online for additional information.

**Dec. 12**

**Spring turkey second lottery opens**

Statewide

Illinois residents and non-residents may apply. Limit one application per person. Applications are accepted [online](#) or by [mail](#).

**Dec. 12-13**

**Lucia Nights Festival of Lights**

**Bishop Hill State Historic Site**

Bishop Hill | Henry County

Lucia Nights Festival of Lights tree lighting and candle-lit reception will take place 6 to 9 p.m. at [Bishop Hill State Historic Site](#).

**Dec. 12-14**

**Muzzleloader deer hunting season**

Statewide

Learn more about [deer hunting](#) in Illinois, including regulations, requirements and locations on the [HuntIllinois.org](#) calendar.

### **Dec. 13-14**

#### **Arrival event**

##### **Lewis and Clark State Historic Site**

Hartford | Madison County

On Dec. 12, 1803, the Lewis and Clark expedition arrived at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and fixed on a place to build Camp River Dubois. Visit this historic site Dec. 13 and 14 to celebrate this arrival with reenactors, demonstrators and more. Visit [Lewis and Clark online](#) for more details.

### **Dec. 21**

#### **Winter Solstice**

##### **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site**

Collinsville | Madison County

Celebrate winter solstice on Sunday, Dec. 21. It marks the shortest day and longest night of the year in the northern hemisphere, as the sun reaches its southernmost point in the sky. Visit [Cahokia Mounds](#) online for additional information.

### **Dec. 21**

#### **Gilded Age Christmas with Santa**

##### **David Davis Mansion State Historic Site**

Bloomington | McLean County

Visitors are invited to walk through the mansion at night and view each room decked out with beautiful holiday decorations while costumed guides walk the halls. Children can get their picture with Santa. Learn more on the [David Davis Mansion](#) website.

### **Dec. 23**

#### **Mini Explorer's Club: Winter Critters**

##### **Illinois State Museum**

Springfield | Sangamon County

Families are invited to join the Mini Explorer's Club for a lesson about animals in winter. Visit the [Illinois State Museum's website](#) for additional information.

### **Dec. 25**

#### **Traditional Julotta Christmas service**

##### **Bishop Hill State Historic Site**

Bishop Hill | Henry County

Held annually since 1970, this dawn candlelight service incorporates traditional readings and hymns in both Swedish and English. Visit [Bishop Hill State Historic Site online](#) for details.

### **Dec. 31**

#### **La Guianne**

##### **Fort de Chartres**

Prairie du Rocher | Randolph County

In a traditional celebration dating back to 1722, the La Guianne singers will visit houses and Fort de Chartres in the early French town of Prairie du Rocher and sing for the residents. Visit the [Fort de Chartre's website](#) for additional information.

#### **Throughout December**

##### **Various hunting and trapping seasons**

Statewide

Learn more about turkey, waterfowl and furbearer hunting and trapping, and stay up to date with [seasons](#) on the HuntIllinois.org calendar.

**Jan. 1**

**First Day Hikes**

**Illinois State Parks**

Statewide

Take a hike at one of Illinois' state parks and kick off the New Year in nature. Participating parks will have stickers for visitors. Learn more about [First Day Hikes](#) online.

Follow IDNR on [Facebook](#) and its [online calendar](#) of events for further information. View the full list of IDNR [seasonal events](#) online.

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### **About IDNR**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is celebrating 100 years of conservation and service to the people of Illinois throughout 2025. The department was established Aug. 1, 1925, as the Illinois Department of Conservation, bringing under one umbrella oversight of fish and game, forestry, public works, and lakes.

Today, IDNR's work encompasses management of about 400 sites across Illinois, including state parks and historic sites; wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and natural heritage; Lake Michigan water allocation and coastal management; conservation police; mines and minerals; oil and gas; issuance of licenses, permits, and numerous grants; the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta; and the Illinois State Museum. Visit <https://dnr.illinois.gov> for more information.