



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## March Newsbits from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is sharing the following upcoming events and noteworthy items for March 2026.

### March 1

#### **Illinois fishing licenses go on sale Statewide**

Illinois fishing licenses are available for purchase online and at designated vendors across the state. Standard resident licenses are only \$15. Exemptions are available for military and those with disabilities. Learn more at [ifishillinois.org](http://ifishillinois.org).

### March 3

#### **Deer firearm and muzzleloader season lottery**

Statewide

The first lottery for the 2026 deer firearm and muzzleloader season is March 3 through April 30. The lottery is for Illinois residents only, and there is a limit of one application per hunter. Landowner deer firearm permit recipients are not eligible to apply for a firearm permit but may apply for a muzzleloader permit. More information is available at IDNR's [Hunt Illinois](http://HuntIllinois) website.

### March 7

#### **Buds and bark tree hike Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

Learn easy, fun tips for identifying trees using their buds and bark during this one-mile hike. This program is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Call 618-457-4836 for more information or to register. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook for more information.

### March 7

#### **Maple Syrup Festival Argyle Lake State Park**

Colchester | McDonough

Join IDNR staff at the park's visitor center at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 7 for a discussion about trees in the winter and how to identify them. Then set off on a hike to test out your identification skills. Visit [Argyle Lake](#) online for additional details.

### March 8

#### **Art show and award reception Starved Rock State Park**

Oglesby | LaSalle County

Attend the Starved Rock Art Show reception and awards at the Starved Rock Visitor Center. Follow [Starved Rock State Park](#) on Facebook.

**March 8**

**Accessible birding hike**

**Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

The public is invited to a free, one-third mile accessible hike on Post Oak Trail at Giant City State Park. Registration is required. Call 618-457-4836 to register or for more information. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook.

**March 10**

**2026 spring turkey leftover county permits available**

Statewide

Leftover county permits for the 2026 spring turkey season will be available over the counter at [license vendor locations](#) beginning March 10 through May 14 on a first-come, first-served basis until quotas have been met for particular counties. A list of [permits available after the third lottery](#) will be posted online.

**March 14**

**Exploring Starved Rock's Past with Mark Walczynski**

**Starved Rock State Park**

Oglesby | LaSalle County

Discover the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century events that created the foundation for Starved Rock State Park – Illinois' second state park – with historian and author Mark Walczynski. Follow [Starved Rock State Park](#) on Facebook.

**March 14**

**George Roger's Clark Illinois Campaign lecture**

**Lewis and Clark State Historic Site**

Hartford | Madison County

Explore the Revolutionary War in Illinois through the military campaign of William Clark's older brother, George Rogers Clark. Historian Ray Brundage will show how the western campaigns of the Revolution led to Illinois becoming part of the United States. View upcoming events at [Lewis and Clark State Historic Site](#) online.

**March 14**

**Maple Syrup Festival**

**Pere Marquette State Park**

Grafton | Jersey County

Celebrate the beauty of the season at [Pere Marquette State Park](#). Enjoy a cozy afternoon of painting the park's natural winter landscapes. All materials will be provided. This is a free and family-friendly event. Reservations are recommended by calling 618-786-3323 or emailing [menachem.smolianski@illinois.gov](mailto:menachem.smolianski@illinois.gov).

**March 14**

**Amphibians hike**

**Cache River Wetlands Center**

Cypress | Johnson County

Learn about amphibians and the Cache River Wetlands Center at the Cache River State Natural Area in southern Illinois. The program will be followed up an optional hike. Follow Cache River State Natural Area on [Facebook](#) for additional details.

**March 15**

**Understanding grasses and hedges**

**Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

Join local botanist Chris Benda as he discusses how to identify the differences between some common grasses and sedges of southern Illinois. Register by calling 618-457-4836. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook for more information.

**March 16-20**

**Pop Up and Drop In: Spring Break at ISM**

**Illinois State Museum**

Springfield | Sangamon County

Looking for an activity while the kids are out of school for spring break? The Illinois State Museum in Springfield will host special programming and activities March 16-20. Learn more at [illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org).

**March 19**

**Illinois Conservation Foundation Outdoor Hall of Fame Gala**

Abbington Banquets, Glen Ellyn | DuPage County

Join the [Illinois Conservation Foundation](#) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as they honor the 2026 inductees into the Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame. Illinois Outdoor Excellence awardees also will be recognized.

[Registration required](#). Gala proceeds support the Illinois Conservation Foundation's programs.

**March 21**

**Egg-cellent natural dyes**

**Giant City State Park**

Makanda | Jackson County

Learn about natural dyeing techniques for Easter eggs. This program is free and open to the public but requires registration by calling 618-457-4836. Follow [Giant City State Park](#) on Facebook for more information.

**March 28**

**Art in the Park workshop**

**Starved Rock State Park**

Oglesby | LaSalle County

In this artisanal clay workshop, learn to find and process local clays with techniques similar to those that were used 1,000 years ago. [Register](#) online at Starved Rock's Eventbrite.

**March 28-29**

**First youth spring turkey hunting season**

**Select counties statewide**

Illinois' spring youth turkey hunt is open to hunters who have not reached the age of 18 prior to the opening date of the youth season. Hunters must have an apprentice or youth hunting license, or they must have completed a state-approved hunter education course and have a hunting license, unless exempt. Learn more on the [IDNR hunting website](#).

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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