



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 12](#)

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each district, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

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## **NORTHWEST**

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Black Hawk Lake is ice free. Anglers are catching panfish in Town Bay using crawlers and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching perch in Town Bay. Some sorting is needed. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching bluegill in Town Bay.

### [North Raccoon River \(above State Highway 175 bridge near Auburn\)](#)

**Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing has been productive. Target walleye in areas below riffles and in deeper pools.

### [Storm Lake \(including Little Storm Lake\)](#)

Storm Lake is ice free. The after ice-out fishing has been productive. Storm Lake has a daily limit of 3 walleye and all 17- to 22-inch walleye must be released; and no more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use crawlers and minnows on a small jig fished from shore and in the marina. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye fishing has been productive. Anglers have had luck from shore and in the marina. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: This is a good time of year to target catfish from shore using cut bait fished on the bottom.

Lakes are ice free in West Central Iowa. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Clear Lake](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** The main lake has open water on the south and east shore. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use a dead chub fished on the bottom.

### [Winnebago River](#)

**Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are being caught below the dams.

Ice conditions have deteriorated with the warm temperatures. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Area Rivers are up, but the fishing should improve as water levels drop. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### [Center Lake](#)

The aeration system has been turned off. Ice conditions have deteriorated

significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### East Okoboji Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Bluegill** - Good: Sorting is needed, but the bite has been good in the southern section of the lake along the weed line. Try near the trestle and the Hattie Elston Boat Ramp. Use small jigs and wigglers. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Yellow Bass** – Fair.

### Ingham Lake

The aeration system has been turned off. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Lost Island Lake

The aeration system has been turned off. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The aeration system has been turned off. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Spirit Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Bluegill** - Fair: Use wigglers and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Trickles Slough. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try minnows and small jigs in Anglers Bay and near Minniwaukon. Best bite is early and late. Be prepared to move around until you get on top of them. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

### Trumbull Lake

Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Size quality is outstanding with some sorting. Use jigs and minnows or wigglers in the main lake.

### West Okoboji Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Bluegill** - Good: Little Emerson Bay is producing a few nice bluegills. Sorting is needed.

### [Willow Creek](#)

Willow Creek was stocked on Feb. 21st for the Osceola County Trout Fest. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

**The Walleye Season is closed for the Iowa Great Lakes.** Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Warm weather has made access very hard. Many area lakes have opened up significantly, allowing for open water fishing in certain areas. Aeration systems at Center Lake, Silver Lake (near Lake Park), and Ingham Lake have been turned off. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## NORTHEAST

### [Cedar River \(above Nashua\)](#)

The Cedar River rose over 6 feet earlier in the week and remains high. Water clarity is poor. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: With ice-out, find windward shoreline to fish. Use chunks of dead chubs or other dead fish.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Gravel roads are getting soft and some streams are off-color with melting snow and warmer temperatures. Visit [our website](#) to find out when and where trout may be coming to a community near you. The 2020 trout calendar is out; time to plan some outdoor activities. Trout stream stocking start the first week of April. **Brook Trout** - Slow: Midges and small mayflies are hatching on warmer sunny days. Use flies imitating insects hatching. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Off-color water will turn brown trout on. Strong midge hatches are occurring. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. Use a fly imitating a midge emerging from its exoskeleton. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: With muddy water, use a worm or cheese floated through a pool under a bobber. Use an ultra-light pole and reel for fun action.

### [Lake Hendricks](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice conditions are deteriorating fast.

### [Lake Meyer](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice has totally pulled away from the shore.

### [Turkey River \(above Clermont\)](#)

Water levels rose over the week with snow melt; the river is muddy.

### [Volga Lake](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice has pulled away from the shore. Water is pooled on top of the ice.

Ice fishing season is over on area lakes. Warm weather caused ice to pull away from shore and is melting fast. Area rivers are high and muddy. Air temperatures greatly fluctuating, along with precipitation type and potential for this weekend. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### [Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

River level at Lansing has risen to 9.2 feet and expected to reach 11 feet this week. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters.

### [Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

River level at Lyxnville has risen to 19 feet this week and will hit 21 feet this week. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters.

### [Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level at Guttenberg has risen to 10.4 feet and expected to reach 12.9 feet this week. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a

minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters.

Upper Mississippi River levels are rising quickly this week. Ice has gone out of the main channel. **Ice in backwaters is unsafe**. Anglers are open water fishing at the dams; expect high water and fast current as flows increases.

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### [Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 9.4 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 11.7 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to rise. The water temperature is 40 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwater is open. **Sauger** - Good: The tailwaters are opening up; many small sauger are being caught, but the water level is rising. **Walleye** - Good: The spring walleye bite has started; use jig and minnows or crawlers. **Northern Pike** - Good: Some northern pike are being taken using large spinners and cut bait in backwater areas.

### [Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is 10.5 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. The water temperature is 40 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwater is open. **Sauger** - Good: Angler catches have been a mixed bag. Some anglers report nice-sized sauger and walleye. Others report great numbers of fish, but nearly all are small. **Walleye** - Good: The spring walleye bite has started; use jig and minnows or crawlers. Try also pulling crankbaits. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Some keepers and some small paddlefish are being snagged. See page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for paddlefish regulations.

### [Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 9.9 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 12.7 feet at Camanche and 7.2 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 40 degrees. River levels are rising. The tailwater has been generally open. **Sauger** - Fair: Early winter catches were decent with lots of smaller sauger reported along with some nice ones mixed in. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is underway. See page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for paddlefish regulations. **Walleye** - Good: Anglers are using a variety of tactics to find nice walleye; most are doing best on a simple jig and minnow.

### [Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is around 10.6 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is around 40 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Tailwaters are open through the district. Water levels are rising with recent warm weather. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

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### [Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 10.66 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 12.5 feet next week. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters or Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers in the tailwaters or Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

### [Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.82 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 11.8 feet by March 18. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

### [Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 11.22 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 13.6 feet by March 18. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. The Toolsboro ramp is currently open, but conditions may change with the rising river levels. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for this pool this week.

### [Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.61 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 9.6 feet by March 18. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports or ramp condition reports for this pool.

Tailwater stages have been on the rise this past week. Main channel water temperature is around 41-43 degrees. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers this past week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## SOUTHEAST

### Big Hollow Lake

Warm weather has melted the last of the ice off of the lake. A few boats have been out; no reports on how they did.

### Lake Belva Deer

The lake went ice free after last weekend's warm weather. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: A good place to try for early season bass is along the north side shorelines at the upper end of the lake where there is a rocky bottom.

### Lake Darling

Open water. Have just seen one boat out on the lake. Docks at ramps are not in yet. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Ice-out is a good time to try for catfish. Use cut bait along the rocks with the wind blowing into them. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: It's a good time to fish for bass. Slow working soft plastics along the sunny shorelines works best.

### **Lake Darling District Farm Ponds**

Ponds are ice free; many are muddy from the recent rains.

### Lost Grove Lake

Ice condition on the lake continue to deteriorate. Use Extreme Caution. **Not recommended to go out on the ice.** **Black Crappie** - Fair: The few anglers that are still going out continue to catch crappies.

For more information on the above lake, call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

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### Central Park Lake

Most of the lake is ice free. No fishing activity has been reported.

### Coralville Reservoir

The lake is ice free. Surface temps are in the mid-40's. The Corps has started to lower the lake to spring pool. It is predicted to slowly fall over the next two weeks. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use cut bait around the 380/965 bridges. Shallow windblown bays can also be good.

### Diamond Lake

The lake is ice free. The dock/kayak launch are in. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish have been caught off the jetties.

### Hannen Lake

The lake is ice free. The dock/kayak launch are in. No fishing reports are available.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

The lake is ice free. Docks are in, but there are no fishing reports available.

### Iowa River (Coralville Lake to River Junction)

Fishing reports are from the past week; things may change due to the change in flow. Flows have gone from <3000 CFS to 5000 CFS this weekend. **Walleye** - Fair: Some fish were being caught below the dams in deeper pools on jigs.

### Lake Macbride

The lake is ice free. Surface temperatures are in the low 40's. The docks are not in as of March 12. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish are being caught east of the causeway, especially on warmer days. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Some fish have been caught on dead shad in the upper ends of the lake. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Fish windblown banks where shad may be found.

### Otter Creek Lake

The lake is ice free. The dock is in. A few anglers have been, out but no reports are available.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

The lake is ice free. The docks are scheduled to be in for the weekend. No fishing reports are available.

### Rodgers Park Lake

Most of the lake is open. There has been some fishing activity, but no reports are available.

### Sand Lake

This is the quarry in Marshalltown. The lake is ice free. No reports are available.

### Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

**Walleye** - Good: Jig and plastics work best. **Northern Pike** - Good: Jig and plastics are also catching pike.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### Lake Miami

Anglers are catching some largemouth bass along the shore.

### Lake Sugema

The lake is all open water.

### Lake Wapello

The lake is all open water.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.44 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Use nightcrawlers on windblown shores.

### Red Haw Lake

Anglers are catching largemouth bass along the shore. The docks have been put in.

All lakes in the district are open water. The district includes Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Wayne and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

## **SOUTHWEST**

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish on the windblown side of the lake using dead shad. Start at the north end where the shallow water warms first.

### [Des Moines River \(Saylorville to Red Rock\)](#)

**Walleye** - Fair: March through April is a good time to target walleye and northern pike below the dams and mouths of creeks. Use jigs tipped with twister tails, shad, and shiner imitating swimbaits or live minnows.

### [Saylorville Reservoir](#)

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish on the windblown shores using dead gizzard shad. The area below the Big Creek spillway can also be a good place to try as dead shad spill out of Big Creek Lake attracting channel catfish.

Lakes in Central Iowa are all open water. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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### [Greenfield Lake](#)

Greenfield is a good lake to catch ice-out catfish. It also gives anglers a chance to catch a trophy-size channel catfish. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Fish shad sides on the wind-blown shore, especially in the upper end of the lake where water warms sooner.

### [Lake Anita](#)

A few reports of good crappie fishing. Fish will move into the upper end of the north arm of the lake as water temperatures warm. **Black Crappie** - Good: Early crappie fishing can be very good on warm sunny days behind the pontoon boats. Cast a minnow two feet under a bobber with a slow retrieve.

### [Lake Manawa](#)

Lake Manawa catfishing gets good as soon as the ice comes off. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Fish the windblown shorelines with shad sides or cut bait to catch channel catfish of all sizes.

Anglers are gearing up for ice-out catfishing and crappies. For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

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