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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

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Iowa trout stream stockings start March 29

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 25](#)

If you're headed out fishing, please do your part to keep yourself and others safe by following COVID-19 public health and safety guidelines. Go fishing only if you're feeling well. Practice proper social distancing (at least 6 feet away from people who don't live in your household) and keep a face covering handy for when social distancing cannot be maintained. Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer.

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.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Surface water temperature is around 46 degrees. The courtesy docks are in. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig with a small minnow in Town Bay and along Ice House Point. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: After ice-out can be a good time to target channel catfish. Use cut bait or shad fished on the bottom along any windblown shoreline where catfish may be aggressively feeding.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Water levels remain about 4-5 feet low. The courtesy dock on the south ramp is in. The west ramp is the best option to launch a boat with the low water.

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

Walleye – Fair. **Channel Catfish** – Fair.

[North Twin Lake](#)

Courtesy docks are in on the south and southeast boat ramps.

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

The lake is ice-free. Anglers have picked up perch, crappie and walleye in the marina. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Try a tube jig with a small minnow. Most have had good luck in the marina. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Catch 8- to 11-inch perch in the marina with minnows fished on a jig. Some sorting is needed. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Target the abundant channel catfish population that Storm Lake has to offer. Use cut bait or gizzard shad fished on the bottom along any windblown shoreline. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has been hit or miss in the marina over the last week. Expect the bite to get better as water temperatures start to gradually warm.

Lakes in the district are ice-free. Water temperatures are in the mid-40's. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Beeds Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Courtesy docks are in.

[Blue Pit](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: Trout are biting on a variety of baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

[Bluebill Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Gates are closed until the access road dries up a bit.

[Clear Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. The courtesy docks are not in yet. Water temperature is in the low 40's. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish open pockets in the rushes. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try a piece of cut bait fished off the bottom. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing is picking up as water temperatures rise. Try a jig and minnow fished near the outlet and around the island after sunset.

[Lake Cornelia](#)

The lake is ice-free. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a piece of cut bait fished off the bottom.

[Lake Smith](#)

The lake is ice-free. The dock at the boat ramp is not in yet. No fishing activity reported. **Channel Catfish** – Slow.

[Lower Pine Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a piece of cut bait fished on the bottom.

[Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Upper Pine Lake](#)

The lake is mostly ice-free.

[Winnebago River](#)

The northern pike bite should pick up; try fishing a chub in slack water below dams and where smaller creeks enter the river.

For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

[East Okoboji Lake](#)

The walleye season is closed. The lake is completely open and mostly free of ice.

[Spirit Lake](#)

The walleye season is closed. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**. The lake is expected to completely open up this week.

[West Okoboji Lake](#)

The walleye season is closed. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**. The lake is expected to completely open up this week.

The walleye season is closed on Spirit, East Okoboji and West Okoboji Lake. Ice fishing is not recommended. Most of the area ice has deteriorated significantly with total ice-out expected in the next week or so. The extended forecast calls for continued warm temperatures with highs in the 50's and 60's.

For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

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

Water levels are on a slow rise with fairly clear water. Few anglers have been out. **Channel Catfish** - Excellent: Shore anglers using dead chubs or worms on the bottom have been successful.

Decorah District Streams

Trout streams are in good to excellent condition. [Catchable trout stream stocking begins next week](#). All catchable trout stockings will be unannounced due to COVID-19 precautions. A stocking calendar will not be available this year. Please observe social

distancing and mask rules when visiting hatchery grounds. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Get tackle in front of fish and imitate prey movements. Minnow worm midge and caddis flies work well this time of year. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Off-color water from rainfall will spur a brownie bite. Use tackle imitating forage fish or midges; fish the edge of a weed bed or large rock. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Try flies imitating prey drifting down in pool edges and heads. Fish the hatch on sunny afternoons.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Ice went out over the weekend. Few anglers have been out. As bite will improve as the water warms. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try a dead chub or worm fished in wind rowed areas.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Few anglers have been out this week. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use a worm or piece of dead chub fished near bottom in areas with wind pushed brush and ice. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try fishing in shallow vegetated areas.

[Volga Lake](#)

Few anglers have been out this week. The bite will improve as the water warms. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Try chunks of chubs or worms fished on the bottom along wind rowed shores.

Area river water levels are up and clarity is good. Rain is possible over weekend with highs in low 50's to 30's. To reduce the spread of [aquatic invasive species](#), throw unused bait in the trash. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

Anglers are getting after walleyes with success on the Cedar River. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow. Concentrate on pools and current breaks. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Cast and retrieve large spinnerbaits or float a live chub or shiner underneath a bobber in off-channel pools.

Manchester District Streams

All area Manchester trout streams are in excellent condition and providing insect hatches with the recent warmer weather. **Brown Trout** - Fair: [Spring Branch Creek](#) is a favorite amongst anglers for quality and trophy-sized brown trout.

[Maquoketa River \(above Monticello\)](#)

The Maquoketa River in Delaware County has been up and down with the recent rainfall. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow; concentrate on pools and current breaks.

[Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#)

Reports of anglers catching walleye on the Shell Rock River. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow; concentrate on pools and current breaks.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Tripoli to Troy Mills\)](#)

The river has bumped up after the recent rainfall. Reports of anglers catching walleye and northern pike on the Wapsipinicon River. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast and retrieve large spinnerbaits or fish a live shiner or chub under a bobber near off-channel areas. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow; concentrate on pools and current breaks.

Interior rivers are providing good angling opportunities for walleye, pike and smallmouth bass. Trout streams are in excellent condition and providing some insect hatches with the warmer weather. For further information contact your area bait and tackle shops. All field stations and fish hatcheries remain closed. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 8.7 feet at Lansing and is expected to rise a foot late next week. Water temperature is 46 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow or piece of worm. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish move into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels. **Walleye** - Fair: Drift a three-way rig with a jig or crankbait off current breaks below the Lock & Dams. **Sauger** - Fair: Drift a three-way rig with a jig or crankbait off

current breaks below the Lock & Dams. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small piece of worm fished under a bobber in areas with little to no current.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level at Lynxville is fluctuating near 617.5 feet. Water temperature is 47 degrees at Lynxville dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Drift a three-way rig with a jig or crankbait off current breaks below the Lock & Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish move into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small piece of worm fished under a bobber in areas with little to no current.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is 9.2 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to rise near 10.6 feet over the next week. Water temperature is 45 degrees at the Guttenberg dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Drift a three-way rig with a jig or crankbait off current breaks below the Lock and Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish move into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small piece of worm fished under a bobber in areas with little to no current.

Upper Mississippi River levels are rising. Water temperature has risen into the mid-40's this week; fish are more active. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches long must be released immediately. Only one walleye greater than 27 inches can be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily harvest limit of 6 and possession of 12.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water level is expected to rise this week. Water levels are 8.8 feet at the Lock and Dam and 11.1 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 45 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing in the tailwater is all over the place. Some anglers report excellent angling while others are having poor luck. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow or pulling crankbaits. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Report of ice-out bass fishing being very good in the sunny wind swept ends of backwater lakes. Fish at a slow speed. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Expect the pike bite to pick up soon as the water warms. Pike will spawn in the Mississippi River when water temperatures are in the mid-40's; they often go on a feeding spree when spawning is over.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is 10.0 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. Water temperature is around 46 degrees. Water clarity is good. The Bellevue City and DNR ramps are open for use in the tailwater. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). As the water has risen, paddlefish have dispersed a bit. **Walleye** - Fair: The walleye bite is all over the place. Some anglers are on them while others report nothing but frustration. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow or pulling crankbaits. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Expect the pike bite to pick up soon as the water warms. Pike will spawn in the Mississippi River when water temperatures are in the mid-40's; they often go on a feeding spree when spawning is over.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is rising at 9.5 feet, 12.5 feet at Camanche and 7.3 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 46 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). As water has risen, the catch of paddlefish is reduced as the fish are scattered. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are pulling a minnow rig. The bite has improved from a slow spring start. Some large females were reported in this week's creel. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Expect the pike bite to pick up soon as the water warms. Pike will spawn in the Mississippi River when water temperatures are in the mid-40's; they often go on a feeding spree when that process is over.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is 10.4 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is near 46 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try cut shad bait early season catfish.

Water temperature in the main channel is around 45 degrees. Water level is rising throughout the district. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-880-8781.

SOUTHEAST

[Discovery Park Pond](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: It's a good time to go trout fishing at the front pond at the Discovery Park. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[East Lake Park Pond](#)

This city park pond is on the east side of Mount Pleasant by the airport. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: This 6.5 acre pond was stocked for the first time with rainbow trout earlier this week. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Water temperature is in the low 40's. Very little activity on the lake this week. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch catfish near where the marsh dumps in and in the campground arm of the lake.

[Lake Darling](#)

Water temperature dropped to the low 40's with the rainy weather. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Anglers are catching catfish along the in-lake silt dams and up a little into Honey Creek.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Wind and rain has kept angler numbers down. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Find catfish working the rocky points where the wind is blowing into shore. **Walleye** - No Report: Work the face of the dam early morning or late evening.

[Wilson Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked earlier this week. Plenty of nice rainbow trout are waiting to be caught. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

[Cedar River \(La Porte City to Cedar Rapids\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: Anglers are catching mostly males. **Northern Pike** – Slow.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level is 683.3 feet. A dock is in at the Macbride State Park ramp. The Corps' ramps will have docks in by April 1, when launch fees begin. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Catch catfish with cut bait around and above the 380/965 bridges. Try shallow windblown flats at the upper end as well.

[Diamond Lake](#)

Little fishing activity yet. A year round boat dock is in, but the rest of the facilities are closed.

[Iowa Lake \(Iowa Co.\)](#)

Water temperatures are in the low 40's. The docks are in and bathrooms are open. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: It is quality over quantity right now. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Black Crappie** – Slow.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Water temperatures are around 40-42 degrees. The boat docks will be put in the first week of April. There are two new boat slips at Main Ramp and Opie Ave ramp for year-round use. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows over brush in 10-15 feet of water. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Some big fish were caught this week in the upper arms; use cut bait.

[Liberty Centre Pond](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

Little fishing activity yet. The dock is not in and the fish cleaning station is still closed.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The docks are in. No fishing reports.

[Prairie Park Fishery](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Little fishing activity yet. The docks are not in at this time.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#) |

All boat ramps in Linn County are open. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows under floats in the backwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: The bite should pick up below the dams soon. Try jigs or crankbaits.

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

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

The lake is open water.

[Lake Miami](#)

The lake is ice-free. Target channel catfish this time of year.

[Lake Sugema](#)

The lake is open water.

[Lake Wapello](#)

The lake is open water. Target channel catfish with nightcrawlers.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South \(Trout Pond\)](#)

Trout have been stocked. Use live minnows fished under a bobber, small tube and twister jigs, in-line spinners and casting spoons. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 906.06 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Target windblown shorelines with shad sides or nightcrawlers.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

The boat docks are in. Target channel catfish with nightcrawlers.

The lakes in south central Iowa are ice-free. 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

[Banner Lake \(south\)](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked on March 18. Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

Channel Catfish - Fair: Channel catfish are feeding on winter-killed gizzard shad as the ice goes off. Bottom fish dead shad from shore on the wind-blown side of the lake. Target the shallower shorelines on the upper half of the lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Jig or troll minnows in areas from the marina around to the beach, the east boat ramp bay and the west boat ramp bay.

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

Walleye - Fair: Through March, catch walleyes below the dams from Saylorville to below Red Rock. Cast jigs tipped with twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Catch pike below the dams and near the mouths of creeks entering the river. Cast jigs tipped with twister tails or swimbaits.

[Terra Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: Trout were stocked on March 17. Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

Big Lake (Including Gilbert's Pond)

Rainbow trout were stocked last week. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast small spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a bobber. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Greenfield Lake

Channel Catfish - No Report: Greenfield has a good population of channel catfish of all sizes. After the ice goes out is a good time to target catfish.

Lake Anita

Historically, Lake Anita provides good early spring fishing in the upper end of the north arm. Fish move in behind the pontoon area as the water temperatures warm. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Cast small jigs two foot under a bobber. Sorting is needed; there is a large year class of 6-inch crappies.

Lake Manawa

Manawa is a good destination for ice-out catfish. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Channel catfish are actively feeding on winter-killed fish. Target catfish on wind-blown shorelines with shad sides.

Littlefield Lake

A **winterkill** was reported to the DNR last week at Littlefield. Fishery staff will survey the lake this spring and restock if needed.

Meadow Lake

Meadow Lake has a good fish population. Bluegills will average 8-inches and black crappies 10- to 12-inches. Largemouth bass and channel catfish are also doing well.

For more information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Little River Watershed Lake

Courtesy docks are in at the main ramp and bait shop ramp.

Three Mile Lake

Courtesy docks are installed at the main boat ramp.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

The dock is in at the main ramp.

Mount Ayr district lakes are ice-free. Surface water temperature is in the upper 40's to low 50's. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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