



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

IOWA'S FISHING ATLAS ONLINE

WWW.IOWADNR.GOV/FISHING

- 200 county and state lake contour maps
- 1,500 fish structure locations
- Mobile friendly -- sync with your current GPS location
- Free and updated annually!

Start planning your spring fishing trips today!



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 8.](#)

March Fishing Podcast

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. 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](#)

The schedule is set - it's time to plan your northeast Iowa trout fishing trips. Get the most out of your trip with information about each stream's location, qualities, and other fun facts on the [trout streams webpage](#).

Trout Stream Stocking Calendar

NORTHWEST

Black Hawk Lake

Town Bay is open. Any remaining ice on the lake is unsafe for travel. More reports will be available as open water fishing begins.

Brushy Creek Lake

Any remaining ice is unsafe for travel. More reports will be available as we receive them.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Ice is pulling away from many access points along shore. There are large areas of open water. Travel on any remaining ice is not recommended. Immediately after ice out is a good time to target channel catfish along shore using cut bait.

Remaining ice in western Iowa is unsuitable for ice fishing. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 15-17 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Yellow Bass** - Good: The bite has picked up. Use light tackle and be mobile to stay on fish. The best bite is still at early morning and late afternoon. **Walleye** – Fair: Try jigging spoons and minnow heads. The best bite is still at early morning and the last hour of light. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 14-17 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with spikes or a minnow head near the edge of the dredge cut. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small jig tipped with spikes near the edge of the dredge cut.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 15-18 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 15-18 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended.

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

East Okoboji Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Yellow bass action continues; best early morning with jigs tipped with wigglers. Fish traditional sites and move often to find active fish.

Five Island Lake

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers have had good pole bending activity with numbers of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Action has picked up, good numbers of fish have been harvested; fish the dredge cuts for the best action. **Black Crappie** - Good: Incidental catches by yellow bass anglers reflect bonus numbers in the creel.

Ingham Lake

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Good numbers of fish are being caught; fish the Stoney Point area for the best action. **Walleye** - Fair: Numbers of fish are reported from Lost Island Lake; change tactics with the changing weather conditions. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some yellow perch and black crappie are being caught by anglers fishing for yellow bass.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto)

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers report catching walleye; best bite is during late day. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fishing action has been very variable; ice anglers are catching nice size perch.

Spirit Lake

Limited access to the lake. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Reports of yellow perch action on the south east end of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Report of crappie and bluegill from the Templar Park area.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Persistent and patient anglers will be rewarded with good numbers of yellow perch 12 inches and larger in the creel. **Northern Pike** - Good: Action has picked up; anglers are harvesting northern pike from the lake.

West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Bluegills continue to be fussy; persistence and patience will be rewarded with good numbers of fish caught. Reports of improving water clarity. **Northern Pike** - Good: Good numbers of fish up to 36 inches are being caught. Tip-up action will improve in the next few weeks. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Report of yellow perch being caught from the deep water areas and some fish reported from the north end.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions in the impoundments are unsafe, especially with fluctuating water levels. Water clarity is improving. **Walleye** - Slow: Use a worm hooked in a worm harness fished below the dams.

Decorah District Streams

Many streams remain slightly off color. Slack water in deeper holes may freeze, but should melt by afternoon. With a slower bite, use bigger flashier flies and lures. Parking lots on wildlife management areas are not plowed. Use care when parking along the road. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Midges hatch all season. Try wholly buggers or a flashy fly for a hungry brookie. **Brown Trout** - Brown Trout are aggressive with melt water or run-off inputs. Increasing numbers of insects are hatching on sunny afternoons. Use small midge or caddis patterns. With off color water, try a flashy spinner or fly. **Rainbow Trout**- Fair: Drift a feathered spinner, crankbait or a hook tipped with worm along an undercut bank.

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is at least 12 inches. Few anglers are out. Open water around the aerator. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Move around to find fish. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow head. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes around structure.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 12 inches. Water clarity is improving. Early morning bite is best. When the bite slows, move to a different spot. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill**- Slow: Use small jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Key in to brush and dangle a small jig about a foot or two above the stems.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is 12+ inches. Early and late bite is best. Culverts were placed on the ice for habitat; avoid this area as ice may not be safe. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Drop your lure about 3 feet above structure and watch them swim up to the bait. Use small teardrop shaped jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish around structure in 14-16 feet water about a foot off the bottom.

Temperatures warm to the upper 30s through the weekend. Possibility of rain/snow Saturday night into Sunday. River and stream clarity is improving. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports of a few walleye being caught on the Cedar River in Black Hawk and Bremer Counties. **Walleye** – Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Manchester District Streams

Trout Streams are in good condition. Continue to use winter tactics including streamers, jigs, and crankbaits. **Brown Trout** - Good: Browns can be easier to catch on days where the water color is stained. **Rainbow Trout** – Slow. **Brook Trout** – Slow.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

There have been no reports on the Maquoketa River, but levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

There have been no reports on the Shell Rock River, but levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

There have been no reports on the Shell Rock River, but levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Ice fishing is not recommended anywhere as conditions are not safe. Eastern Iowa rivers are beginning to open; open water fishing opportunities are available on the Cedar, Shell Rock, Wapsipinicon and Maquoketa. Flows are above seasonal averages on rivers, but are not excessively high for spring. Area trout streams are in good condition. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing is fairly stable at 7.9 feet. Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. Ice conditions are variable with very few areas having safe access. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Some last ice bluegills are still being caught in backwaters with no current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike will start

to feed actively before the spawn. Look for the bite to pick up with warming temperatures.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville has fallen a foot to 14.3 feet. . Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. Ice conditions are variable in the backwaters with very few areas having safe access. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as warmer water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Fair: Some fish are in the tail-waters. Expect the bite to pick up with warmer water temperatures this week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some last ice bluegills are still being caught in backwaters with no current. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike will start to feed actively before the spawn. Look for the bite to pick up with warming temperatures.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tail-waters have fallen several feet to 6.08 feet this week. Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. Backwater ice conditions are variable with very few areas having safe access. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Slow: Some fish are in the tail-waters. Expect the bite to pick up with warmer water temperatures this week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some last ice bluegills are still being caught in backwaters with no current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike will start to feed actively before the spawn. Look for the bite to pick up with warming temperatures.

Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen slightly this week with main channel areas mostly free of ice flows with water temperatures still in the low 30's. Water clarity is still poor from the spring melt-off. Ice fishing is not recommended due to unsafe ice.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are stabilizing at 5.7 feet at the Dubuque Lock and the RR bridge is 8.3 feet. This is down a few feet from last week. Some ice flows still reported. Places like O'Leary's backwater still have some ice in them, but it is melted along the shore. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Look for the perch bite to pick up as the ice melts. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Expecting the northern pike creel to increase over the next couple of months. **Walleye** - Fair: Some scattered reports of walleyes being taken in the tailwaters and more along wing dams. Fishing is fair to poor, but could improve with better weather conditions.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels are stabilizing at 6.5 feet at Bellevue. This down over a foot from last week. Both Bellevue City ramp and the DNR ramp are open, but some minor ice flows are still seen. Paddlefish season is now underway. Please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). **Paddlefish** - Fair: Some were caught, especially on the opener, but fish are reported up off the bottom. **Sauger** - Fair: Hit or miss. Some reported good catches when weather was nice while others struggled. **Walleye** – Fair.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are falling and are 6.2 feet at Fulton, 10.3 feet at Camanche and 5.1 feet at LeClaire. This down over a foot from last week. Paddlefish season is underway; Ramps are mostly open and free of ice, but you will find periodic ice chunks. **Paddlefish** - No Report: Season is underway; please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). **Sauger** - Fair: Anglers report sauger fishing as scattered, but it could get decent if water levels stabilize.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels are falling and are 7.8 feet at Rock Island. This is down two feet from last week and will be much more "fishable" this week. **Sauger** - Fair: Fish are scattered, but some are being reported on jigs and minnow.

The River levels have dropped throughout the district. Tailwaters are open for boat launching, but some ice flows are still occurring. Ice fishing appears to be over in the district, but some ice remains in backwaters especially in Pool 12. Most backwaters are now open water in Pool 13 through 15. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.81 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is falling. Marquette St boat ramp is open. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. **Sauger** - Slow: Reports of a few saugers being caught in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.78 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. We have not received any reports on tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers. **Sauger** - No Report: Try fishing below the dam with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.99 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. We have not received any tailwater fishing information for walleye and saugers this

week. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.12 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is falling. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for walleyes and saugers.

River stages have been falling the past few days. Water clarity is poor. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Some skim ice in the mornings. Lake is open otherwise.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

The lake is ice free. Not much angler activity.

[Lake Darling](#)

The lake has been ice free for the last week. On the cold mornings, there is a little ice around the edges in the bays. The boat docks are not in; be careful on the boat ramps, there is some ice on them from the waves coming in. Just a few anglers out, mostly to get the boats off the trailers.

[Lake Geode](#)

Drained for renovation work scheduled for later this year. With the warmer weather, the bottom of the lake will thaw out and get soft again; use caution when walking around on the bottom of the lake.

[Skunk River \(Rose Hill to Coppock\)](#)

The river has been ice free since early last week. River level is running about 1/2 bank full. Have seen a couple of boats out on the river, but no reports on the fishing.

For more information on the fishing at the above lakes and rivers, contact the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake is drained for the renovation project that is going on now.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake is ice free. The lake level is now being drawn down. It is predicted to reach spring pool of 679.4' on March 16. There is about 3,000 CFS flowing out of the lake this

week. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Some fish have been caught on cut shad in shallow windblown areas. Some fish are also being caught around the 380/965 bridges.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The lake is ice free and a boat dock is in. No fishing activity has been reported yet.

[Green Castle Lake](#)

Most of the ice was gone this week.

[Hannen Lake](#)

Most of the ice was going out this week.

[Iowa Lake \(Iowa County\)](#)

The lake is ice free and the boat dock is in. There have been a few anglers out, but no fishing reports are available.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is drained for the renovation project that will take place next winter.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake is ice free. No docks are in yet. There have been boat and shore anglers out, but no reports are available.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice free. There is no boat dock in at this time. No fishing activity has been reported yet.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still 8 feet low from the restoration project, but the lake is ice free.

[Rodgers Park Lake](#)

Most of the ice was going out this week.

[Sand Lake](#)

Most of the ice was gone this week.

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

The river and backwaters are open at Pinicon Ridge. The water is dropping, but it is still turbid. No fishing reports are available.

Lakes in the Macbride District are unsafe for ice fishing. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

The lake is ice free.

Lake Sugema

Lake Sugema and Tug Forks are completely free of ice.

Lake Wapello

The lake is free of ice. Use cut bait on the windblown shorelines to catch channel catfish this time of year.

Ottumwa Park Pond South

Trout are scheduled to be stocked on Saturday, March 24th at 11:00 a.m.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.46 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. The campgrounds are closed. The lake is ice free. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use shad sides or cut bait on the windblown shorelines.

Red Haw Lake

The lake is ice free.

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

SOUTHWEST

Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake

Rainbow Trout - Good: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail or tube jigs and live minnows or waxworms under a bobber in the open water areas.

Big Creek Lake

As of Wednesday, March 8, Big Creek was open water north of the Williams Drive boat ramp.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: As flows reduce, it's a good time to start fishing below the Saylorville and downtown dams. Jigs tipped with twister tails and/or minnows work best.

Lakes in Central Iowa are mostly ice free or the remaining ice is unsuitable for ice fishing. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.