



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



FISHING

Ten categories of angling fun.

FRENZY!

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of April 5.](#)

April 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.

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You have a few more weekends to experience the thrill of catching a trout at one of our urban trout lakes.

Check the [Spring Urban Trout Stocking Schedule](#) to find an urban lake close to you.

Invite a kid, your best friend or the whole family to come along.

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Bluegill - Good: Use waxworms and crawlers along Ice House Point shoreline and from the floating dock. . **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some perch are being picked up from the floating dock in Town Bay. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use crawlers and minnows fished from shore and from the floating dock.

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

Walleye - Good: Catch good numbers of walleye from the state marina throwing twisters or fishing minnows under a bobber. **White Bass** - Fair: Anglers are having luck fishing from shore on the east side and from the marina. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie from the marina using minnows and a twister.

Shore fishing action is picking up in Western Iowa Lakes. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Clear Lake is about 40 percent ice free.

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

River levels are up. Try fishing the slack water areas below a dam with live bait.

[Winnebago River](#)

River levels are high.

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](#)

Bluegill - Fair: Bluegill action is reported off the south ramp (Hwy 71) in 8 feet of water. Sorting is needed. Best action is early evening hours. Yellow bass, perch and crappie are also mixed in the catch. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Ice out brings excellent channel catfish fishing as catfish go on a feeding frenzy. There is open water at the spillway and bridges; Lower Gar Lake has extensive open water. Fish these areas for some early "pole bending" action.

[Spirit Lake](#)

Yellow Perch - Fair: Reports of yellow perch action on the south end of the lake. Best action is early morning and evening with a jig tipped with a minnow head.

[West Okoboji Lake](#)

Limited fishing activity; the majority of the anglers are focusing on the north end of the lake.

Foot traffic only on the Iowa Great Lakes. Access areas are soft with "rubber or water proof boots" needed to get through the slush. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

With the recent cold snap, skim ice is covering backwaters. Impoundments are fishing well. **Walleye** - Good: Fish below the dams with a variety of baits for a pre-spawn walleye. A jig tipped with a minnow is best. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Anglers fishing impoundments are catching catfish using a hook tipped with dead chubs.

Decorah District Streams

Streams will be stocked with catchable trout as weather permits. Listen to the trout stocking hotline (563-927-5736) for daily plans. Plan a trip to your favorite trout stream. Check out [this year's trout stream stocking calendar](#). Area streams received about 5 inches of snow on Tuesday. Use care when accessing streams. Icy conditions exist. **Brook Trout** - Good: Use a streamer to mimic minnows or subsurface flies like scuds or pheasant tail nymphs. **Brown Trout** - Good: Melt water and run-off inputs drive Brown Trout into a feeding frenzy. Use small midge, caddis, or flashy streamer patterns. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Float a feathered spinner or crankbait past a freshly stocked fish. A piece of worm under a bobber also works in the deeper holes.

Lake Hendricks

Few anglers have been out.

Lake Meyer

Anglers have not been out.

Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Anglers are finding fish below the dams and in deeper holes. Water levels are unseasonably low. **Walleye** - Fair: Use jigs with twister tails and crankbaits. **White Sucker** - Fair: Anglers report suckers are starting to hit.

Volga Lake

Few anglers have been out.

Snow likely on Sunday. Temperatures are low 30's for highs dipping into low 20's at night. Rivers and streams are fishable. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

Walleye fishing and catch has been sporadic, some days are good while others are not so good on the Cedar River. River conditions remain in good condition, but temperatures need to warm up. **Walleye** – Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig with plastics tipped with a minnow below low head dams or look for the sandbar drop-offs. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig with plastics tipped with a minnow.

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

There has been a lot of angling activity near the whitewater park recently in Delaware County, but few reports.

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

The Shell Rock River has been hit and miss for walleye fishing. The extended forecast looks poor for warming temperatures any time soon.

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

There have been no reports this past week for the Wapsipinicon River.

Fishing reports have been mixed this past week with the roller coaster of weather.

Walleye fishing is spotty and anglers are catching a few smallmouth bass and northern pike. Trout stocking season has started; trout streams remain in excellent 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 has risen to 8.9 feet and is expected to slowly level off over the next week. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are a couple of weeks away from spawning and should be actively feeding. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch**- Excellent: Perch bite is getting better; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger**- Good: Sauger bite is picking up as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike**- Good: Pike are spawning; anglers report catching some nice pike with live bait.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville has risen over a foot at 17.9 feet and is expected to level off over the next week. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. Water temperature is 38 degrees at the dam. Tailwaters are concentrating a lot of active fish right now. **Walleye**- Good: Walleye are a couple of weeks away from spawning; the bite is picking up in the tailwaters. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Perch bite is getting better along the shorelines in

the tailwaters; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger bite is picking up in the tailwaters as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike** - Good: Pike are spawning; anglers report catching some nice pike with live bait.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level at Guttenberg has bumped up to 9.3 feet is expected to slowly level off. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. Water temperature at the dam has fall to 38 degrees. Tailwaters are concentrating a lot of active fish right now. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are entering spawning mode; the bite is picking up in the tailwaters. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Perch bite is getting better along the shorelines in the tailwaters; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger bite is picking up in the tailwaters as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike** - Good: Pike are spawning; anglers report catching some nice pike with live bait.

Upper Mississippi River levels are slowly starting to rise as the spring thaw continues. Most backwater areas are now free of ice with water temperatures slowly climbing into the lower 40's. Spring fishing is starting to get better as water temperatures warm up.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are stable at 8.6 feet at the Dubuque Lock and the RR bridge is 10.9 feet. This is up from last week. The channel water temperature is still only around 40 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some scattered reports of ring perch catches, but not many people out fishing for them. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some reports of northern pike being picked up by tailwater anglers. **Walleye** - Fair: Fishing has been good at times for walleye and sauger this spring, but poor weather is limiting activity and slowing the spawning season.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels at Bellevue are 9.8 feet and are stabilizing. Both Bellevue City ramp and the DNR ramp are open, but no courtesy dock is available yet at the DNR ramp. Paddlefish season is underway. Please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). The channel water temperature is around 41 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch of all sizes are being caught in the tailwaters, but that action has slowed a bit. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Not much has been reported since the opening few days. **Sauger** - Fair: Hit or miss. Some good reports of nice sauger. Most are being taken on minnow rigs. **Walleye** – Fair: Nice slot fish are still being reported. Minnow and jig or pulling crank baits are the most popular strategies. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Tailwater anglers report catching a few northern pike. They are a little late in spawning this year.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are rising and are 9.2 feet at Fulton, 12.3 feet at Camanche and 6.9 feet at

LeClaire. This is up a bit from last week. The water temperature is around 42 degrees. Paddlefish season is underway; please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). **Paddlefish** - Slow: Good fishing seen early in the season; it has slowed greatly. **Sauger** - Fair: Lots of good reports mixed with some anglers having troubles catching sauger. Most anglers are using minnow rigs. **Walleye** - Slow: Not many being caught, but reports of some very nice sized fish.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels are falling and are 9.7 feet at Rock Island. This is up from last week, but should start receding later this week. Water conditions should remain favorable for angling, but weather has not.

River levels have stabilized and will slowly drop throughout the district. Water levels are still very conducive to angling, but the weather has not. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Not a lot of angler activity on the lake. Water temperatures have fallen back into the 30's. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass are starting to be picked up in the shallower water close to the deeper water. The bass are staying just at the edge of the deeper water most of the time.

[Environmental Discovery Park North Pond](#)

When the weather get nice, this is a great place to take the kids and get out of the house. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Keep moving around this small pond hitting the different brush piles and habitat to find trout. **Brook Trout** – Good.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Water temperature has dropped back into the upper 30's. Nobody has been out on the lake.

[Lake Darling](#)

Water temperature is hanging around 38 degrees. Be careful in the mornings, the spray from the waves overnight is leaving a good coat of ice on the shore and boat docks that takes a while to melt off.

[Lake Geode](#)

Drained for the renovation project. 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.

[Lake of the Hills](#)

When the weather gets nice, get out to Lake of the Hills and catch some really nice

trout. **Brook Trout** - Good: The trout will have gotten use to the lake by now. Target stumps and logs that aren't too deep to find schools of trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Work the habitat in the water 4-6 foot deep, where the trout settled after their many laps around the lake.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Water temperature is in the upper 30's. The boat docks got put in earlier this week, one down at the ramp down at the dam remains out for repairs. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Work the flooded trees in shallow water during the sunny warmer days and out deeper around the trees during the rest of the time. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Crappies are still hanging out around the flooded timber in deeper water.

[Wilson Lake](#)

The trout have picked out their spots to settle down by now. Work the visible cedar tree piles and the culvert to find the trout. **Brook Trout** - Excellent: The trout are still going to be in pretty shallow. Look for them around the brush piles, stumps, and culvert piles that you can see from shore. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Work the shallower habitat to find rainbow trout.

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

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

Benton County has had the best reports so far. **Walleye** - Fair: Jigs and crankbaits work well. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some nice fish are being picked up.

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained and undergoing a lake renovation project. It will be completed this spring.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake is at normal spring pool of 679.4 feet. At this level, boating above the Lake Macbride Park ramp is not advised. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Some fish have been caught on cut shad or shad guts under the 965/380 bridges and in the channel of the main lake.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The boat dock is always in. There has not been much fishing pressure this week. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try tubes or jigs tipped with waxworms fished off the jetties or over brush. Most fish are 8-9 inches.

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

The water temperature is hovering around 40 degrees. There has not been much fishing activity this week. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake renovation project. It is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2019.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake temperature is around 40 degrees. The boat docks are in, but the fish cleaning stations are not available yet. **Walleye** – Slow. Black Crappie – Slow.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The boat dock and T-dock at the north end are in. The fish cleaning station is not open yet. No fishing reports are available.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still 8 feet low from the restoration project. The main ramp is open and the boat dock is in. Use caution when launching and boating at this water level. Water temperatures this week were in the low 40's. **Walleye** - Slow: Some fish are being caught in deep water. Fish taken from 20+ feet often do not survive as their air bladders expand out of their mouth. **Muskellunge** - Slow: A couple fish were reported this past week.

[Prairie Park Fishery](#)

1500 trout will be stocked here on March 31st. Iowa residents and nonresidents who are required to have a fishing license must pay the Trout Fee to fish for or possess trout. Exception: Anglers under 16 years old may possess or fish for trout without having paid the Trout Fee if they fish with a properly licensed adult who has paid the Trout Fee and together their combined limit is 5. **Brook Trout** – Fair. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

[Terry Trueblood Lake](#)

2000 trout were stocked here on March 30th. Iowa residents and nonresidents who are required to have a fishing license must pay the Trout Fee to fish for or possess trout. Exception: Anglers under 16 years old may possess or fish for trout without having paid the Trout Fee if they fish with a properly licensed adult who has paid the Trout Fee and together their combined limit is 5. **Brook Trout** – Fair. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

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

Walleye - Fair: A few fish are being caught on jigs below the dams. Mornings have been best. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish a minnow under a bobber in the backwaters. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait in deeper holes.

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

[Lake Sugema](#)

Try using cut bait for channel catfish.

Lake Wapello

Use cut bait on the windblown shorelines to catch channel catfish this time of year.

Ottumwa Park Pond South

Trout were stocked on March 30th. Try small tube and twister jigs, in-line spinners or casting spoons.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.68 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** - Fair: Use shad sides or cut bait on the windblown shorelines.

Red Haw Lake

Try cut bait for channel catfish. Target shorelines with the wind blowing in.

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 - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail or tube jigs and live minnows or waxworms under a bobber. Find trout in the north and south sections of the lake; move around to find the schools.

Banner Lake (south)

Rainbow Trout - Good: The spring trout stocking will be this Saturday, April 7th at 11:00 a.m. Use inline spinners, small casting spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller jigs with twister tails, and waxworms or minnows under a bobber.

Big Creek Lake

Walleye - Fair: Some anglers are starting to catch walleyes off points and rip rap shorelines in the mid and lower lake. They are being caught on jig and twister tails, jig and minnow, or slow trolling minnow rigs.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: It is a good time to fish below the Saylorville and downtown dams. Jigs tipped with twister tails and/or minnows work best. The best walleye fishing will be through April if flows do not get too high. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Catfishing with dead shad has been good in the river from Saylorville through downtown Des Moines.

More fishing reports will be added when warmer weather brings more anglers to the water. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

[Farm Creek Lake](#)

Farm Creek Lake will offer good early spring crappie fishing in the upper end as water temperatures warm.

[Lake Anita](#)

Crappies were caught this week at Lake Anita. As water temperatures warm, crappies will move into the pontoon area of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few reports of good crappie fishing this week. Cast a jig two feet under a bobber in the pontoon area of the lake. Warm sunny days are best.

[Lake Manawa](#)

Warm sunny days offer good crappie fishing in the canals. Lake Manawa is also a good destination for early spring catfishing. **White Crappie** - Slow: A few crappies are being caught in the canals. Warm sunny days are best. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Fish the windy shoreline with shad sides or cut bait. Channel catfish in Manawa are all sizes.

[Meadow Lake](#)

Meadow has a good population of 10 inch black crappie.

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose will offer good panfishing this spring. The lake has quality sized bluegills and crappies are acceptable size. Target the brush piles.

[Viking Lake](#)

Find early spring crappies in the campground arm and behind the pontoon area. A few bass are being caught in the deeper brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Jig plastics in deeper brush piles.

There were a few reports of good crappie fishing this week, but overall very little fishing activity in the southwest district. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Largemouth Bass - Slow: Catch largemouth bass up to 19 inches using crankbaits fished along the silt dams and rocky shoreline areas.

[Little River Watershed Lake](#)

Walleye - Slow: Catch walleyes up to 22 inches with jigs tipped with a minnow fished

along the roadbed.

Summit Lake

Bluegill - Slow: A few bluegills up to 8.5 inches have been caught with jigs under a bobber fished along cedar tree brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few crappies up to 9.5 inches have been caught using jigs under a bobber fished along cedar tree brush piles.

Lakes in the Mount Ayr district are 100% ice free. Water temperature in most district lakes is about 40 degrees. Limited fishing activity observed this week. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.