



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

## Conservation and Recreation



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 21](#)

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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## NORTHWEST

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Look for open water fishing opportunities at the inlet bridge and around the fishing shelter in Town Bay. Little fishing activity since last week.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

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

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice conditions are generally unknown and can change fast with the warm temperatures and recent rains. Access will be difficult or impossible as ice along shore continues to degrade. Look for potential open water angling opportunities near the inlet.

Ice fishing is not recommended on most lakes in the district; ice conditions are deteriorating fast, especially along shore. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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## Clear Lake

There is still 18 - 20 inches of ice on most of the lake. The top several inches of ice is now soft and conditions are changing fast with the warm temperatures. Foot traffic only advised. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Yellow Bass** – Good. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Walleye** – Slow.

With above freezing temperatures this week, ice conditions are changing fast. Use caution near vegetation sticking out of the ice and near the accesses. Foot traffic only advised. For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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No vehicles are being driven on the Iowa Great Lakes and area lakes. Foot traffic only as ice at access points is changing daily with the snow melt and warm temperatures. Limited fishing activity observed at the Iowa Great Lakes and area lakes. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

## NORTHEAST

### **Decorah District Streams**

Streams with better water quality will clear faster. Clarity is improving with dry conditions and slow snow melt. Catchable trout stocking season starts soon; check the [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) to find out when your favorite trout stream will be stocked. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Spin fishers using minnow imitating jigs will do well. In clear water, use a dark jig with a bright red spot. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Many stocked rainbows from last season are waiting to be caught. Use a minnow or worm under a bobber. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Midges are hatching on sunny afternoons.

### Lake Hendricks

About 20 inches of ice on the lake. Water clarity is excellent. Open water around the aerator; use caution in this area. No motorized vehicles allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use jigs tipped with plastic tails. Fish 9- to 10-inches are common. **Bluegill** - Fair: Small gills are biting. Try a small jig tipped with a spike.

### Lake Meyer

Water is cloudy under 20 inches of ice. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish about 5 feet off the bottom around brush and stumps. Use a lure that irritates the fish to bite.

### Volga Lake

Drifted snow covering 10 to 20 inches of ice. Few anglers have been out. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a spike or waxworm. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a jig tipped with waxworm or spike in about 10 feet of water around brush piles, rocky mounds or rip-rap.

Spring is here. Mostly sunny through Saturday with a chance of rain moving in on Sunday. Temperatures are mid-40's to low 50's. This might be the last weekend for ice

fishing. Area streams and rivers are muddy with continued snow melt. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### **Manchester District Streams**

Area trout streams are in good condition and providing some good afternoon insect hatches with the recent warmer weather.

Fishing reports are very few with the recent warm weather and snow melt. Ice fishing is not recommended; ice conditions are deteriorating fast. Interior rivers remain high and dangerous. 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 is 13.4 feet at Lansing and predicted to rise to 14.2 feet next week. Avoid ice on shoreline edges and areas of current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Set tip-ups in shallow backwater lakes to catch fish moving into spawning areas. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegill bite is best mid-to-late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Expect perch to start biting along opened areas of side channels. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are biting in isolated backwaters. Late ice can be good fishing.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

River level is 23.6 feet at Lynxville and expected to reach 24.4 feet next week. Avoid areas of current and shorelines. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Set tip-ups in shallow backwater lakes to catch fish moving into spawning areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill bite is best mid-to-late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Expect perch to start biting along opened areas of side channels. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are biting in isolated backwaters. Late ice can be good fishing.

### **Mississippi River Pool 11**

River level is 14.5 feet at Guttenberg and expected to rise to 15 feet next week. Boat ramps are still closed. DNR ramp is free of ice. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Set tip-ups in shallow backwater lakes to catch fish moving into spawning areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill bite is best mid-to-late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are biting in isolated backwaters. Late ice can be good fishing.

Upper Mississippi River levels continue to rise due to snow-melt. Ice is starting to break up in the channel this week. Water clarity is poor with ice coming downstream. Boat ramps are flooded.

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

Water levels are near 15.5 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 17.3 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Most of ice in the main channel opened up last week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs with waxworms. Usually late winter bluegill fishing picks up quite a bit. Water seeping in along edges will be an issue for anglers wanting to get on the ice sheets. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being caught on waxworms.

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

Water levels are 16 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is 34 degrees. The Bellevue City boat ramp is open, but there is floating ice. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a three way rig with minnows or a jig and minnow. Flooding will adversely affect sauger fishing this week. **Bluegill** - No Report: Late winter is usually when the bluegill bite really picks up. Water seeping in along edges will adversely affect ice fishing this week. **Paddlefish** - No Report: Paddlefish season is open. Please review [paddlefish regulations](#) before trying to snag for them.

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

Water levels are 16 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 17.1 feet at Camanche and 11.1 feet at LeClaire. These are all minor to moderate flood levels. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows. High water will adversely affect tailwater fishing this week. **Bluegill** - No Report: Water seeping in along edges will adversely affect ice fishing this week. **Paddlefish** - No Report: Paddlefish season is open. Please review [paddlefish regulations](#) before trying to snag for them.

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

The water level is 17.2 feet, which is a moderate flood level. Water clarity is poor. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. No fishing has been reported to us in Pool 15.

Water levels are expected to crest on Thursday and maybe start to recede. Flood stages will vary in the district from action to moderate flooding. Floating ice is an issue at most ramps. Ice fishing will be adversely affected by high water, especially along the edges of the backwater ice. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

Unsafe ice.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice. Open water around the edges.

### [Lake Darling](#)

Unsafe ice. Open water around the edges and areas with current and on north side in the sun.

### **Lost Grove Lake**

Unsafe ice. Mostly open around the edges.

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

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### **Coralville Reservoir**

The lake is almost ice free. The lake level is 702 feet (normal spring pool is 679 feet) and is supposed to crest at 703 feet next week.

### **Diamond Lake**

Unsafe ice.

### **Hannen Lake**

Ice fishing is not recommended. The ice has softened and shorelines are deteriorating.

### **Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)**

Unsafe ice.

### **Kent Park Lake**

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project that will be completed this spring.

### **Lake Macbride**

Ice fishing is not recommended. The ice is getting soft and the edges are deteriorating.

### **Otter Creek Lake**

Ice fishing is not recommended. The ice has softened and shorelines are deteriorating.

### **Pleasant Creek Lake**

Ice fishing is not recommended. The ice is getting soft and the edges are deteriorating.

Most lakes in the district have unsafe ice conditions. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### **Lake Miami**

The lake is open around the shorelines and the ice that is left is not strong enough to support anglers.

### **Lake Sugema**

The lake has some open water spots and ice in others. The ice that is left is not thick enough to support anglers.

### **Lake Wapello**

The lake still has ice, but is open around the shoreline and in the area around the beach. The ice is not thick enough to support anglers.

### **Ottumwa Park Pond South**

Trout are scheduled to be stocked on Saturday, March 30th at 11 a.m.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 910.86 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. The lake still has ice, but there is open water around the shorelines. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

### Red Haw Lake

There is open water around the shorelines; the ice that is left is not enough to support anglers.

There is no safe ice in the Rathbun district. Most lakes still have ice, but there is open water around the shoreline and the ice that is left won't support anglers. 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**

### Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish in the backed up water in the tributaries out of the main river current. The best bait is cut gizzard shad.

Ice conditions in Central Iowa are deteriorating, especially around the edges. Ice fishing is not recommended. 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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Ice conditions have deteriorated to the point of being unsafe in the southwest district. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.