



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



99 counties full of fish to tackle with new buddies

*It's all about the invitation!* Snag a new angler this spring—invite a child, friend, family member, co-worker or neighbor to go fishing.

## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 28](#)

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](#)

The lake will likely be completely ice free soon. Anglers have been fishing open water near the inlet and in Town Bay.

### [Black Hawk Pits](#)

Anglers have had luck fishing open water along the south end of Black Hawk Pits. **BlackCrappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up keeper sized fish near the south end.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Any remaining ice is unsafe.

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

Any remaining ice is unsafe. The Marina is ice free; look for fishing activity in the marina to pick up as water temperatures increase.

Some lakes are partially or completely open. Any remaining ice is unsafe. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Clear Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

### [Lower Pine Lake](#)

No open water yet.

### [Winnebago River](#)

The river level is three feet high and dropping. Now is the time to target pike; fish areas with current breaks.

Ice fishing is not 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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### [East Okoboji Lake](#)

**Channel Catfish** - Good: Prime time is here; ice-out provides an excellent bite using traditional baits. Fish twilight and after dark; fish will be on a feeding frenzy and provide lots of "pole bending" action.

### [Spirit Lake](#)

Ice is changing and deteriorating daily. No ice fishing activity in the Iowa Great Lakes and area lakes.

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

## **NORTHEAST**

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

Levels are falling with improved clarity. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use dead chubs fished in the impoundments or slack water areas. Keep your bait on the river bottom. **Walleye** - Fair: A few keeper size walleyes are taking bait. Try a jig tipped with a minnow.

## **Decorah District Streams**

Trout streams are in good condition. Gravel roads are soft by afternoon. Catchable trout stockings start April 1; check the [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) to find out when your favorite trout stream will be stocked. Trucks will stock as many spots as possible. **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. If trout are chasing minnows at tails of riffles, try using a streamer or minnow imitating lure.

### Lake Hendricks

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice is deteriorating fast. There is open water around the aerator. No motorized vehicles allowed on the ice.

### Lake Meyer

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

### Turkey River (above Clermont)

Water levels and flows are slowly falling. Clarity is improving. **Walleye** - Slow: Use a jig tipped with a minnow or shallow water crankbait in the slack water areas below dams with.

### Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Flows and levels are elevated, but can be fished. Clarity is improving. Bite is better in the morning. Find water level information at <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/rt>. **White Sucker** - Fair: Suckers are starting to bite. Use worm fished on bottom. You might have to use a bit more weight to keep the line down with the elevated flows.

### Upper Iowa River (below Decorah)

Flows and levels are elevated, but can be fished. Clarity is improving. Bite is better in the morning. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are biting. Try Jigs tipped with a minnow or crankbaits.

### Volga Lake

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

Mostly sunny through the weekend with a chance of rain. Temperatures in the 40's with lows below freezing. Ice conditions are deteriorating fast on area lakes. Area streams and rivers are high with clarity improving as a majority of snow is melted. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

### Mississippi River Pool 9

River level is 17.3 feet at Lansing and is still rising. Water temperature is 38 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Use leaders tipped with flashy lures fished in shallow backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try light tackle tipped with minnows fished near shore along marina areas. **Sauger**- Fair: Use small jigs tipped with minnows close to shore in flooded areas. **Walleye** - Good: Fish with three-way rigs tipped with a minnow below the dam.

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

River level is 28.1 feet at Lynxville and is rising. Water temperature is near 39 degrees at the dam. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Use leaders tipped with flashy lures fished in shallow backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try light tackle tipped with minnows fished near shore along marina areas. **Sauger** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with minnows close to shore in flooded areas. **Walleye** - Fair: Fish with three-way rigs tipped with a minnow below the dam.

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

River level is 17.9 feet at Guttenberg and is rising. Boat ramps are under water. Water temperature is 36° degrees at the dam. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike spawn is starting; the fish are on the pre-spawn bite. Use leaders tipped with flashy lures fished in shallow backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try light tackle tipped with minnows fished near shore along marina areas. **Sauger** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with minnows close to shore in flooded areas. **Walleye** - Fair: Fish with three-way rigs tipped with a minnow below the dam.

Upper Mississippi River levels are at moderate flood stages and are still rising. Main channel areas are mostly ice free with fair water clarity. Water temp is near 38 degrees. Most boat ramps are under water.

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

Water levels are currently rising and are near 16.9 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 18.6 feet at the RR bridge. This is moderate flood stage. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is 36 degrees. **Sauger** - Slow: Some fish are being caught on jigs very tight to the banks.

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

Water levels are 16.7 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is 37 degrees. The City ramp is open at Bellevue and remains one of the few open ramps during moderate flood stages. **Sauger** - Fair: Use a three way rig with minnows or a jig and minnow. They are generally very tight to the bank in high water levels.

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

Water levels are near 17.1 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 18.7 feet at Camanche and 12.4 feet at LeClaire. These are all at moderate flood levels. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is around 38 degrees. Most boat ramps are flooded. **Sauger** - Fair: If you can find a launch spot, a few sauger are being caught on jig and minnows fishing very close to the bank.

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

The water level is near 18.5 feet, which is a major flood level. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is around 39 degrees. Most boat ramps are flooded.

Water levels are still rising and are in moderate to major flood stages throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

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

Tailwater stage is 18.30 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is forecast to start rising again by the end of the weekend. The Marquette St boat ramp, Credit Island boat ramp, Buffalo Shores boat ramp, Clark's Ferry boat ramp, Shady Creek boat ramp, and Fairport boat ramps are all closed due to high water.

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

Tailwater stage is 18.96 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and forecast to start rising again by the end of the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The Muscatine City boat ramps are closed due to high water. Kilpeck Landing and Big Timber are also closed due to flooding.

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

Tailwater stage is 20.39 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston; flood stage is 15 feet. The Toolsboro landing is closed due to high water. The Hawkeye Dolbee access will also be under water.

Pools 16-19 are above flood stage. The river is forecast to start rising again by the end of the weekend or early next week. Most boat ramps are closed due to flooding. Main channel water temperature is around 40 degrees and water clarity is poor. We have not received any fishing report information this week due to the high water conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

Ice went out late last week.

### [Environmental Discovery Park North Pond](#)

The Spring Trout Release will be this Friday, March 29th at 10 am. You must have a fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Ice went out over the weekend. Several boats were out last weekend, but mostly just to get out.

### [Lake Darling](#)

Ice went out last Thursday night. Water temperature is 44-45 degrees. Water clarity is about 2 feet. Run off is making the water muddy.

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

The wind took the ice out last weekend.

### [Wilson Lake](#)

The Spring Trout Release will be this Friday, March 29th at noon. You must have a

fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout.

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

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### Central Park Lake

The lake still had ice earlier in the week. It has been restocked, but fish are still small. The West Pond in the park also had ice on it this week.

### Coralville Reservoir

The lake is ice free. The lake level as of March 28 is 703.5 feet (normal spring pool is 679 feet) and is predicted to slowly fall.

### Diamond Lake

The lake is ice free. The permanent boat dock is in. There is a new kayak launch dock.

### Hannen Lake

The lake is ice free. A permanent boat dock is in.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

The lake is ice free. The permanent boat dock is in.

### Kent Park Lake

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

### Lake Macbride

The lake is ice free as of March 24th. The boat docks have not been put in, but are expected to be in by the first weekend in April. **Walleye** - Good: Use plastics or minnows in 15-25 feet near breaks or stumps. Most fish are 12-16 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish over brush or stumps in 15-20 feet with jigs or minnows. **Spotted bass** - Fair: These are being picked up in similar areas to where walleyes are found. Plastics work best. Most fish are 11-14 inches. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Fish are in 15-25 feet, roaming breaks and off of structure.

### Liberty Centre Pond

1000 trout will be stocked here, 820 West Cherry Street, on Saturday, March 30th at 11 a.m. A number of prizes will be awarded for brook trout caught. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try live bait or small jigs/spinners/scented plastics. **Brook Trout** - Good: Try live bait or small jigs/spinners/scented plastics.

### Otter Creek Lake

The lake was 90 percent ice free on March 27.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

The lake was 80 percent open on March 28. A sheet of ice has drifted in front of the main ramp.

### Sand Lake

This lake in Marshalltown still had ice on it earlier in the week.

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

The lake was still ice covered on March 26.

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

The backwaters at Pinicon Ridge are ice free. The boat ramp on the river is open. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows in the backwaters.

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

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### [Lake Miami](#)

The lake is open.

### [Lake Sugema](#)

The lake is open.

### [Lake Wapello](#)

The lake is open.

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

Trout are scheduled to be stocked on Saturday, March 30th at 11 a.m. You must have a fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout. Catch trout with a variety of methods including a live minnow fished under a bobber, small tube jigs and in-line spinners.

### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 909.36 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. The lake is open. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Anglers are catching channel catfish; use cut bait or shad sides.

### [Red Haw Lake](#)

The lake is open.

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: As the ice recedes, cast in-line spinners small twister tail and paddle tail jigs or live minnows.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

As of March 27, Big Creek was 1/4 open water mid-lake and breaking apart fast. **Walleye** - Slow: As the mid and upper portion of the lake become ice free, walleye fishing will start. Use jigs or troll spinner rigs fished out from the marina to past the beach and around the West Ramp bay.

## **Boone District Farm Ponds**

**Largemouth Bass** - Good: Farm ponds and [community fishing ponds](#) are ice free around the Des Moines metro. Fish soft plastics or spinner baits slowly for a good early season bass bite.

## **[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-out is partial to complete on most Central Iowa ponds and lakes. 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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## **[Anderson Area Pond 1](#)**

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Try a small jig or minnow in the east end of the lake.

## **[Lake Anita](#)**

Crappie and bluegill fishing starts early spring in Lake Anita in the upper end of the east arm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few crappies are being caught in the upper end of the east arm. Cast and retrieve a small jig or a minnow 18 inches under a bobber. **Bluegill** - Fair: A few bluegills are being caught in the upper end of the east arm on small jigs fished 18 inches under a bobber. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Look for largemouth bass on the road bed or off the end of the beach.

## **[Lake Manawa](#)**

Early spring fishing at Lake Manawa starts with crappie fishing in the canals and walleyes on the south shore rip rap. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few crappies are being caught out of the canals on the west side of the lake on small jigs or minnows fished under a bobber. Best fishing is on warmer days. **Walleye** - No Report: Walleyes move into the shallow rip rap areas of the south shore late in March. Cast and retrieve twister tails and crankbaits to catch these fish as they try to spawn. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Use cut bait or shad sides fished in shallow water on the windy side of the lake.

## **[Nodaway Lake](#)**

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Try fishing the face of the dam or the brush piles with small jigs or minnows to catch 10 to 11 inch crappies. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes to move into the rip rap shorelines this spring. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try cut bait or shad sides fished in shallow water on the wind blow side of the lake.

## **[Prairie Rose Lake](#)**

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Catch bass around the brush piles and off the jetties on spinner baits fished with a slow retrieve. **Bluegill** - No Report: Try a small jig fished around the brush piles. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies to move into the rip rap and around the jetties as the water warms.



### Viking Lake

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies in the far upper end of the lake. Cast and slowly retrieve a small 1/64th or 1/32nd ounce jig. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Viking Lake has a good population of bass up to 20 inches. Fish the deeper points and drop-off along the main channel.

District lakes are free of ice; open water fishing has started. Water temperatures are in the low 40's. Look for fish to move shallow on the warm sunny days. Small lakes/farm ponds warm up faster and provide good early spring fishing. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### Twelve Mile Creek Lake

Docks at the main ramp were damaged over the winter; use caution.

Lakes in the Mount Ayr district are ice free; all boat ramps are open. Water temperature is in the low 40's. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.