



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



## April Fishing Podcast

### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of April 4](#)

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](#)

Water temperatures are in the low 40's. Open water fishing has just started. Town Bay, Ice House Point, the inlet bridge, and areas near the outlet are popular shore fishing areas to try as water temperatures warm.

### [Black Hawk Pits](#)

Black Hawk pits are open. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up some crappie.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Open water fishing has just started. Look for more reports as we receive them.

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

Storm Lake is ice free with water temperatures in the low 40's. Open water fishing has just started. Look for shore fishing action to pick up as water temperatures warm. **White Bass** – Fair. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Picking up crappie in the marina. **Walleye** - Fair: A few are being caught. Walleye action will pick up as water temperatures warm and fish move close to shore. Expect walleye spawning to start next week.

Open water fishing has just started. Water temperatures are in the low 40's. Look for shore fishing action to pick up with warming water temperatures. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Clear Lake](#)

Clear Lake is about fifty percent ice free. No fishing activity reported this week.

### [Lower Pine Lake](#)

Lower Pine Lake is ice free. The docks are not in.

### [Winnebago River](#)

The river level is currently two feet high. Now is the time to target pike; fish areas with current breaks.

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 channel catfish baits. Fish twilight and after dark; fish will be on a feeding frenzy and provide lots of "pole bending" action.

No fishing activity; some lakes remain ice covered. Look for ice free conditions soon. 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** - Good: 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 nightcrawler.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Trout streams are in good condition. Gravel roads are soft by afternoon as frost comes out. Catchable trout stocking season is in full swing; trucks will stock as many spots as

possible. Check the [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) or call the stocking number at 563-927- 5736 to find out when your favorite trout stream will be stocked. **Brown Trout** - Good: Blue wing olives are hatching mid-afternoon. Fish are hitting just below the surface; nymph fishing might work best. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Many stocked rainbows from last season are waiting to be caught. Use a minnow or worm under a bobber. **Brook Trout** - Good: 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](#)

Open water is quickly taking over the ice. Fishing from shore is best, especially in shallow areas.

### [Lake Meyer](#)

The lake is about 2/3 covered with ice and opening more every day. There are open areas from the boat ramp to the jetty. Anglers are catching a variety of fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use small plastic lures along shallow rocky shoreline.

### [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. **White Sucker** - Fair: Try a worm fished off the bottom.

### [Upper Iowa River \(above Decorah\)](#)

Flows remain high, but levels are falling. Clarity is improving. 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 high flows.

### [Upper Iowa River \(below Decorah\)](#)

Flows are high; levels are falling Clarity is improving. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are biting. Try Jigs tipped with a minnow or crankbaits.

### [Volga Lake](#)

The lake is free of ice. Concentrate efforts along the shore and shallow warmer water. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes under a bobber in shallow areas.

Rain chance through the weekend with temperatures in the 40's to 50's and breezy. Area streams and rivers are falling with clarity improving, as majority of snow is melted. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

Anglers are doing very well on walleye, smallmouth bass and northern pike in Bremer and Black Hawk counties. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jigs with plastics tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. Walleye are in pre-spawn mode and on the move. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Cast and retrieve jigs with plastics tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. Try also artificial spinnerbaits. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast and

retrieve large artificial baits or spoons. Try also floating a live shiner or sucker under a bobber.

### [Heritage Pond](#)

Heritage Pond will be stocked with trout on Saturday, April 13 at 10 a.m. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Manchester trout streams remain in excellent condition, but access to some are in sloppy condition. Little Mill Creek in Jackson County will not be stocked for at least two weeks due to poor roads.

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

Anglers are catching some walleye on the Maquoketa River in Delaware County. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jigs with plastics tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. Walleye are in pre-spawn mode and on the move.

### [Martens Lake](#)

Anglers are catching a few crappie in the canal at Sweet Marsh. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Cast and retrieve various colored tube jigs or float a crappie minnow under a slip bobber. **White Crappie** - Fair: Cast and retrieve various colored tube jigs or float a crappie minnow under a slip bobber.

### [North Prairie Lake](#)

North Prairie Lake will be stocked with trout on Saturday, April 13 at 11 a.m. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout.

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

Anglers are catching walleye on the Shell Rock River. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jigs with plastics tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. Walleye are in pre-spawn mode and on the move.

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

Reports of anglers catching walleye on the Wapsipinicon River. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve jigs with plastics tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. Walleye are in pre-spawn mode and on the move.

Spring has finally arrived. There are good reports on the interior rivers of anglers catching walleye, smallmouth bass and northern pike. 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](#)

Navigation is not recommended due to flooding; boaters should operate at no wake speed to reduce damage to shorelines and flooded structures. River level is 17.6 feet at Lansing and is expected to crest Friday near this level. The river is expected to fall slowly, but weekend rains may change forecasts. Water temperature is 42 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are spawning; the bite has slowed. **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](#)

Navigation is not recommended due to flooding; boaters should operate at no wake speed to reduce damage to shorelines and flooded structures. River level is 28.4 feet at Lynxville and is expected to crest Friday near this level. The river is expected to fall slowly, but weekend rains may change forecasts. Water temperature is 42 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are spawning; the bite has slowed. **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](#)

Navigation is not recommended due to flooding; boaters should operate at no wake speed to reduce damage to shorelines and flooded structures. River level is 19.2 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to crest Friday near this level. The river is expected to fall slowly, but weekend rains may change forecasts. Water temperature is 42 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are spawning; the bite has slowed. **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.

Navigation is not recommended due to flooding; boaters should operate at no wake speed to reduce damage to shorelines and flooded structures. Upper Mississippi River levels are at moderate flood stages and expected to crest on Friday and start to fall slowly, but weekend rains may change forecasts. Most boat ramps are under water.

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

Water levels are currently rising and expected to crest this week. Levels are near 21 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 22.6 feet at the RR bridge. This is at major flood stage. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 42 degrees. **Sauger** - Good: Good reports of walleye and sauger, even in the flooding water, if you can find a place to launch a boat. Anglers are using jig and minnows.

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

Water levels are currently rising and expected to crest this week. Water level is near 19.9 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. This will be in major flood stage soon. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 43 degrees. The City ramp is open at Bellevue and remains one of the few open ramps during major flood stages; water in the parking lot makes launching a challenge. **Sauger** - Good: 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 currently rising and expected to crest this week. Water levels are near 19.8 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 21 feet at Camanche and 14 feet at LeClaire. These are all at major flood levels. Water clarity is fair. The water temperature is around 43

degrees. Most boat ramps are flooded. **Sauger** - Good: If you can find a launch spot, sauger and walleye are being caught on jig and minnows very close to the bank.

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

Water levels are currently rising and expected to crest this week. The water level is near 19.6 feet, which is at a major flood threat. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 43 degrees. Most boat ramps are flooded.

Water levels are still rising and are in 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 19.54 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities; flood stage is 15 feet. The current forecast has the river cresting at 20.2 feet on Sunday. River stage at Fairport is 20.04 feet; flood stage is 14 feet. 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 19.53 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine; flood stage is 15 feet. The current forecast has the river stage 20.4 feet on Sunday. River stage in Muscatine is 20.70 feet and forecast to reach 21.5 feet by Sunday; flood stage is 16 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 20.04 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston; flood stage is 15 feet. Recent predictions has the river reaching 20.7 feet on Sunday. River stage at Keithsburg is 18.2 feet; flood stage is 14 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 and rising. Recent predictions have the river cresting on Sunday/Monday, but forecasts may change with predicted rain. Many of the boat ramps are closed due to flooding. 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](#)

A few boats have been out, mostly to get out. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: Catching a few bass along the dam and around the rip rap around the islands

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

The spring trout stocking was last Friday; 1000 trout (500 brook trout and 500 rainbow

trout) were stocked. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout.

### Lake Belva Deer

Water temperature was 45 degrees on April 3. Water clarity was about 29 inches. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: On a sunny day, target the north side of the upper end of the lake where the shallow water was covered in rock.

### Lake Darling

Water temperature is between 46 and 47 degrees in the afternoon. Water Clarity is about 26 inches. **Channel Catfish** – Slow: If it rains this weekend when it's warm, target where the water comes through the in-lake silt dams; using nightcrawlers or cut bait. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: Anglers are starting to pick up a few bass along the rocks and shallow brush piles by the main boat ramp.

### Lost Grove Lake

Water temperature is in the low to mid-40's. **Largemouth Bass** – Fair: Can be good during the sunny afternoons in the shallows. Work slow; the water is still plenty cold and so are the bass.

### Wilson Lake

The Spring Trout Release was last Friday; 1000 trout (500 brook trout and 500 rainbow trout) were stocked. 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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### Coralville Reservoir

The lake level as of April 3 is 701 feet (normal spring pool is 679 feet), but is now slowly falling. Ramps at Sugar Bottom, Lake Macbride, and Sandy Beach are currently underwater.

### Diamond Lake

The permanent boat dock is in; there is a new kayak launch dock. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try tube jigs or jigs tipped with worms. Anglers fishing off the jetties are having some success. Most fish are 8- to 9-inches.

### Hannen Lake

Anglers have been out, but no reports are available.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Water temperatures were in the mid 40's this week. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow.

### Kent Park Lake

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

### Lake Macbride

The water temperature this week was about 44 degrees. Boat docks were put in this week. **Walleye** - Good: Use plastics or minnows in 15-25 feet near breaks or stumps. Most fish are 12- to 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- to 14-inches. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Fish are in 15-25 feet, roaming breaks and off of structure. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Fish around wood or brush. There are a lot of fish moving shallow now.

### Liberty Centre Pond

1500 trout were stocked here last Saturday. 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 boat docks are not in yet, and the fish cleaning station is still closed. No fishing reports are available.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

The docks at the main ramp were being put in this week. No fishing reports are available.

### Sand Lake

This lake in Marshalltown still is ice free. Quite a few anglers have been out, but no fishing report is available.

### Wapsipicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

The water level is close to normal and is clearing up. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows in the backwaters. **Walleye** - Fair: Fish jigs below the dams.

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

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### Lake Miami

Angling pressure has been low. Start in the shallows, they will warm first.

### Lake Sugema

Start in the shallows, they will warm first.

### Lake Wapello

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait or dead chubs.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South

Trout were stocked here last Saturday. You must have a fishing license and a 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 908.61 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

Try small jigs in the shallows for bluegills or cut bait for channel catfish.

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 in-line spinners, small twister tail and paddle tail jigs or live minnows. Start by fishing the east shoreline of the north and south parts of the lake.

### Banner Lake (south)

The lake water clarity is less than normal after flooding. A trout stocking and family fishing event will be held Saturday, April 6 at noon. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try bright colored spinners and jigs or live bait.

### Big Creek Lake

**Walleye** - Fair: Use jigs or troll spinner rigs fished out from the marina to past the beach and around the West Ramp bay in the evenings. If shore fishing, cast jigs or live bait under a slip bobber in these same areas.

### **Boone District Farm Ponds**

**Largemouth Bass** - Good: 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.

### Terra Lake

A trout stocking and family fishing event will be held Saturday, April 6 at 1 p.m. You must have a fishing license and a pay the trout fee to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use small inline spinners and jigs with twister or paddle tails. Try also waxworms and live minnows.

Open water fishing has started. 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

Expect anglers to catch bluegills and crappies this spring. **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 bass on the road bed and underwater reefs.

### 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** - Slow: Crappie fishing starts in the canals at Manawa. Cast a jig and minnow 18 inches under a bobber. Warm sunny days are best. **Walleye** - No Report: Walleyes will move close to shore during the first part of April. Cast twister tails and minnows with a slow retrieve. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Manawa has a good catfish population. Cast cut bait or shad sides on the windy shoreline for fun early spring fishing.

### Nodaway Lake

Nodaway Lake has a good population of black crappies and fair numbers of walleyes. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Look for early spring crappies along the face of the dam and deeper brush piles. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Cast cut bait or shad sides in the upper end of the lake where the water warms sooner.

### Prairie Rose Lake

Prairie Rose has an abundance of sublegal 13 inch bass for [catch and release fishing](#), 8- to 9 inch bluegills, and quality size black crappies. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Cast around the brush piles. **Bluegill** - No Report: Look for bluegills around deep brush piles. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappies will be moving close to the jetties as the water warms.

### Viking Lake

Early spring fishing at Viking Lake starts when the crappies move into in the campground area. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies in the far upper end of the lake and behind the pontoons. 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.

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

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### Green Valley Lake

**Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try jigs fished along the silt dams for largemouth bass up to 20 inches.

### Little River Watershed Lake

**Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 9 inches with nightcrawlers fished near cedar tree

brush piles.

### **Three Mile Lake**

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

All boat ramps are open and docks are in at most lakes. Water temperature in most Mount Ayr district lakes is in the low to mid-40's. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.