



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

## Conservation and Recreation



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

#### 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. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each district, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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- [SOUTHEAST](#)
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## NORTHWEST

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice is deteriorating fast and will open up soon. **Any remaining ice is unsafe.** **Yellow Perch** - Fair: As of March 5<sup>th</sup>, there are open water fishing opportunities in Town Bay Inlet Bay.

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

Ice is deteriorating fast with warm temperatures and windy conditions. **Any remaining ice is unsafe.** There are open water angling opportunities near the inlet and in Marina Bay.

Many lakes are starting to open up with warm temperatures and windy conditions; **any remaining ice is unsafe**. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 14 to 16 inches. Use caution near the aeration systems and near the rushes. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch are biting on a variety of baits. Use larger baits and change location to find bigger fish. **Walleye** - Slow: Try a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head near the edge of vegetation. Best bite is during low light periods. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Use your electronics to find suspended fish in the deeper dredge cuts in the little lake. Best bite is early morning. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Try a small spoon tipped with cut bait or several waxworms. You have to move around to find fish. Best bite is late afternoon.

### Lower Pine Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended** on upper or lower pine lakes.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 13 to 15 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm. Best bite is late afternoon. **Yellow Perch** – Slow: Try a small jigging spoon tipped with a waxworm. **Walleye** – Slow.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 13 to 15 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair: Best bite is early morning and late afternoon.

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

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### Center Lake

Ice thickness is 11 to 14 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution on the west side of the lake, north of the boat ramp. Signs are up around the aerator hole.

### East Okoboji Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice thickness is 14 to 15 inches. **Bluegill** - Good: Sorting is needed, but the bite has been good in the southern section of the lake along the weed line. Try near the trestle and the Hattie Elston Boat Ramp. Use small jigs and wigglers. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Yellow Bass** – Fair.

### Ingham Lake

Ice thickness is 15 to 19 inches. The aeration system has been started. Signs are up around the aerator hole.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 16 to 20 inches. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is 14 to 17 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution on

the east side of the lake. Signs are up around the aeration holes.

### Spirit Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice thickness is 16 to 20 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use wigglers and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Trickles Slough. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try minnows and small jigs in Anglers Bay and near Minniwaukon. Best bite is early and late. Be prepared to move around until you get on top of them. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

### Trumbull Lake

Ice thickness is 14 to 20 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Size quality is outstanding with some sorting. Use jigs and minnows or wigglers in the main lake.

### West Okoboji Lake

**The Walleye Season is closed.** Ice conditions are variable. Beware of heaves at Atwell and Gull Point; don't drive over heaves/seams. Ice thickness has been up to 14 inches in small bays and thinner on the main lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Little Emerson Bay is producing a few nice bluegills. Sorting is needed.

### Willow Creek

Willow Creek was stocked on Feb. 21st for the Osceola County Trout Fest. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

**The Walleye Season is closed for the Iowa Great Lakes.** Ice thickness is 14 to 20 inches on area lakes. Ice thickness on area lakes is ranging from 14-20 inches. Ice conditions are deteriorating due to warm weather making accessing the lakes harder, but once on the lake ice is generally good. Be weary of holes caused by springs/methane release. Do not travel under bridges and other areas of flow; most of these areas have little to no ice. Aeration systems are active at Center Lake, Silver Lake (near Lake Park), and Ingham Lake. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Cedar River is losing ice fast as channels open up. **It is not recommended to access backwater ice.** **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Anglers are finding a few perch using a hook tipped with a minnow. **Walleye** - Good: Anglers are finding walleye below dams. Use jigs tipped with a shiner. Be ready to compete with ice chunks passing through the dams. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Bass are hitting shiners.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Gravel roads are getting soft and some streams are off-color with melting snow and warmer temperatures. **Brook Trout** - Good: Midges and small mayflies are hatching on warmer sunny days. Use flies imitating insects hatching. **Brown Trout** - Good: Off-color water will turn brown trout on. Strong midge hatches are occurring. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Fish are actively

hitting the surface early afternoon. Use an ultra-light pole and reel for fun action. Try a spinner in eddies and around structure.

### Lake Hendricks

Lake Hendricks has about 10 inches of ice. Windy conditions will quickly open up water around the aerator; be careful around this area. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm. Fish are suspended off the bottom. A variety of sizes are being caught. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small hook tipped with a waxworm or spike.

### Lake Meyer

Lake Meyer has 10 inches of ice. Use care when going on ice, especially around the dam. Check ice depths often. Hit or miss panfish action. **Bluegill** - Slow: Anglers are marking a lot of fish, but few bites. Find gills around brush piles using a small jig tipped with a waxworm fished near the bottom. Morning bite is best. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Crappie are suspended above brush piles. Baited hooks work best. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Catching bass while fishing for panfish.

### Turkey River (above Clermont)

Backwaters and slack water areas are losing ice fast. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on Vernon Springs impoundment when covered with ice. **Walleye** - Slow: Anglers are catching walleye in off-channel areas and drop-offs using minnows.

### Volga Lake

Ten inches of ice on Volga Lake. Ice is starting to turn white with melt water sitting on top. Use care when going on ice; check ice depths often. Conditions may change fast. Fish action remains spotty. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use waxworms or spikes fished in brush or rock piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try small bait on small hooks. Gills are small.

Temperatures will warm to the low 60's by Sunday. Use care on area waters. Ice conditions change fast this time of year. Fish activity is picking up on area lakes. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

The Cedar River should be mostly free of ice by this weekend, but will remain high and turbid. Reports had been decent for walleye before the rise in river levels. River conditions should start to improve over the next week with the extended forecast.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams will be hit and miss with the recent snowmelt and extended warmer forecast. Brown trout fishing can be good with low turbidity conditions on area streams. Call ahead to check on stream conditions in your area of fishing interest. **Brown Trout** - Good: Match the hatch with the recent warm weather and insect hatches along area streams. Try flashy lures or jigs when stream conditions are off-color or turbid.

Interior rivers have risen and remain turbid with the recent snowmelt. No reports of ice fishing this past week. Ice conditions will drastically deteriorate this weekend with temperatures in the sixties. **Ice fishing is not recommended in our District.** Trout

streams will be hit and miss with the snowmelt over the span of warmer weather. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing remains stable at near 8.5 feet. Warmer temperatures and fluctuating river levels are making **unsafe ice conditions**. Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Reports of nice-sized perch from Pool 9 backwaters. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite is better later afternoon into evening. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill are biting on waxworms fished through the ice in backwater lakes. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up anglers are having success with shiners or suckers for larger pike. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try a lively shiner on a tip-up for big bass through the ice. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a minnow.

### Mississippi River Pool 10

River level is 15.8 feet at Lynxville. Warmer temperatures and fluctuating river levels are making **unsafe ice conditions**. Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. Johnson Slough at Sny Magill is not safe to cross. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Reports of nice-sized perch from Pool 10 backwaters. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite is better later afternoon into evening. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill are biting on waxworms fished through the ice in backwater lakes. Early morning or later afternoon bite is best. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up anglers are having success with shiners or suckers for larger pike. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Try a lively shiner on a tip-up for big bass through the ice. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a minnow.

### Mississippi River Pool 11

River level at Guttenberg has fallen over a foot to 7.9 feet. The Guttenberg city ramp is open. Warmer temperatures and fluctuating river levels are making **unsafe ice conditions**. Open water fishing below the dams has picked up. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are biting in Sunfish and Mud Lake with a lot of sorting out smaller ones. Use caution and avoid the creek area at Mud Lake; **unsafe ice**. Fish in deeper cuts with some vegetation in backwater areas. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite is better later afternoon into evening. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up anglers are having success with shiners or suckers for larger pike. Mudlake and Sunfish in lower Pool 11 have been good for pike this week. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try a lively shiner on a tip-up for big bass through the ice. **Sauger** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are moving up to the dams; use jigs tipped with a minnow.

Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen this past week. Ice conditions are deteriorating fast with warmer temperatures. Ice anglers are getting some late season panfish and

northern pike. Use extreme caution; ice is disappearing fast. It is unsafe to walk on ice in any areas with current.

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

The water level is 8.1 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10.1 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to rise. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwater is mostly free of ice, but some ice flows are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: The tailwaters are opening up; many small sauger are being caught. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills are abundant, but not very aggressive. Use light equipment, small jigs and rod tips able to detect small hits. Lots of sorting is needed, but you can find some nice-sized gills. Ice conditions are becoming variable. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Anglers are catching a yellow perch or two when bluegill fishing. Some exceptional yellow perch creels were seen in early ice. Big ring perch often get active again during late ice fishing season. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few incidental crappies are being caught when ice fishing for bluegills. Reports of some nice crappies. **Walleye** - Good: The spring walleye bite has started; use jig and minnows or crawlers. **Northern Pike** - Good: Some northern pike are being taken using tip-ups and large shiners.

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

Water level is 8.7 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwater is open. The city ramp has stayed ice free. Backwater ice depth is variable; use caution when ice fishing. **Sauger** - Good: Angler catches have been a mixed bag. Some anglers report nice-sized sauger and walleye. Others report great numbers of fish, but nearly all are small. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills are abundant, but not very aggressive. Use light equipment, small jigs and rod tips able to detect small hits. Lots of sorting needed, but you can find some nice-sized gills. Ice is becoming honeycombed in many spots; use caution. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching a yellow perch or two when fishing for bluegill. Some anglers targeted good numbers of yellow perch in early ice, but now are only catching a few each trip. Big ring perch often get active again during late ice fishing season. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few incidental crappies are being caught when ice fishing for bluegills. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Quite a few largemouth bass are being caught through the ice this year. **Walleye** - Good: The spring walleye bite has started; use jig and minnows or crawlers. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Some keepers and some small paddlefish were reported on opening day. See page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for paddlefish regulations.

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

The water level is 8 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 11.4 feet at Camanche and 6.2 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. River levels are rising. The tailwater has been generally open. Backwater ice conditions is getting marginal; use caution. **Sauger** - Fair: Early winter catches were decent with lots of smaller sauger reported along with some nice ones mixed in. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills are abundant, but not very aggressive. Use light equipment, small jigs and rod tips able to detect small hits. Lots of sorting needed, but you can find some nice-sized gills. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few incidental crappies are being caught when ice fishing for bluegills. **Paddlefish** - Fair:

Paddlefish season is underway. See page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for paddlefish regulations. **Walleye** - Good: Anglers are using a variety of tactics to find nice walleye; most are doing best on a simple jig and minnow.

#### **Mississippi River Pool 15**

Water level is around 8.2 feet at Rock Island and is stable. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Tailwaters are opening up throughout the district. Water levels are rising with recent warm weather. Backwater ice fishing conditions are becoming variable. Use caution; especially crossing sloughs with current. Reported backwater ice depths are 1 to 6 inches. Honeycombed ice is being reported. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

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#### **Mississippi River Pool 16**

Tailwater stage is 8.71 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 10 feet next week. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. **Unsafe ice conditions. Walleye** - Fair: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters or Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers in the tailwaters or Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

#### **Mississippi River Pool 17**

Tailwater stage is 7.35 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 9 feet by the middle of next week. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. **Unsafe ice conditions. Walleye** - Good: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits. **Sauger** - Good: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

#### **Mississippi River Pool 18**

Tailwater stage is 8.67 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 10 feet by next week. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. Tailwater fishing has been good this past weekend. The Toolsboro road has been bladed. **Unsafe ice conditions. Walleye** - Good: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with stickbaits. **Sauger** - Good: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with stickbaits.

#### **Mississippi River Pool 19**

Tailwater stage is 5.67 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 7 feet by the middle of next week. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports or ramp condition reports for this pool. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Tailwater stages have been slowly rising this past week. Main channel water temperature is around 37-38 degrees. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers this past week. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

# SOUTHEAST

## Big Hollow Lake

A lot of the main lake is open water. The bays and the boat ramp are still froze over, but won't hold any weight.

## Lake Belva Deer

A fair amount of open water. The south arm and boat ramp below the campground is still frozen over, but don't try to walk on it.

## Lake Darling

Open water. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Ice-out is a good time to try for catfish. Use cut bait along the rocks with the wind blowing into them.

## **Lake Darling District Farm Ponds**

Many district ponds are ice free. Some ponds, back in the trees, still have some ice, but it's unsafe.

## Lost Grove Lake

A lot of the shoreline is open water. There's a good amount of standing water on the ice. **Not recommended to go out on the ice.**

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

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## Central Park Lake

Most of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**

## Coralville Reservoir

Most of the main lake is open water. There are still bays/pockets with ice remaining. The lake is still at winter pool of 683.4'. The Corps plans to drop the lake to spring pool of 679 feet in a week or two. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use cut bait around the 380/965 bridges. Shallow windblown bays can also be good if the ice is gone.

## Diamond Lake

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**

## Green Castle Lake

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**

## Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**

## Lake Macbride

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**

## Otter Creek Lake

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe.**



### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the **remaining ice is unsafe**.

### [Sand Lake](#)

This is the quarry in Marshalltown. Much of the lake is still ice covered, but the remaining **ice is unsafe**.

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

**Backwater ice is unsafe. Walleye** - Good: Jig and plastics work best. **Northern Pike** - Good: Jig and plastics are also catching pike.

**Remaining ice in the area is unsafe.** For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### [Lake Miami](#)

Mostly open water or very thin ice.

### [Lake Sugema](#)

Mostly open water or thin ice.

### [Lake Wapello](#)

Most of the lake is open water with some thin ice on the west end.

### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.21 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 lake is about 50 percent open water with the main lake still having some thin ice.

### [Red Haw Lake](#)

The lake is mostly open water with some thin ice in the coves.

Lakes in the district do not have enough ice to support anglers; most lakes are 50-100 percent open water. The district includes Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Wayne and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

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## **SOUTHWEST**

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish from shore as the ice comes by fishing the open water on the windblown side of the lake using dead shad.

### [Des Moines River \(Saylorville to Red Rock\)](#)

**Walleye** - Fair: March through April is a good time to target walleye and northern pike below the dams and mouths of creeks. Use jigs tipped with twister tails, shad, and shiner imitating swimbaits or live minnows.

## Saylorville Reservoir

**Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish as ice recedes from the shoreline fishing with dead gizzard shad. The area below the Big Creek spillway can also be a good place to try as dead shad spill out of Big Creek Lake attracting channel catfish.

Ice fishing has ended in Central Iowa; lakes are starting to open up. 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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## Lake Anita

**Unsafe ice.**

## Littlefield Lake

Most of the lake is open.

## Prairie Rose Lake

**Unsafe ice.**

Most lakes and ponds in the Southwest District are open water. For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

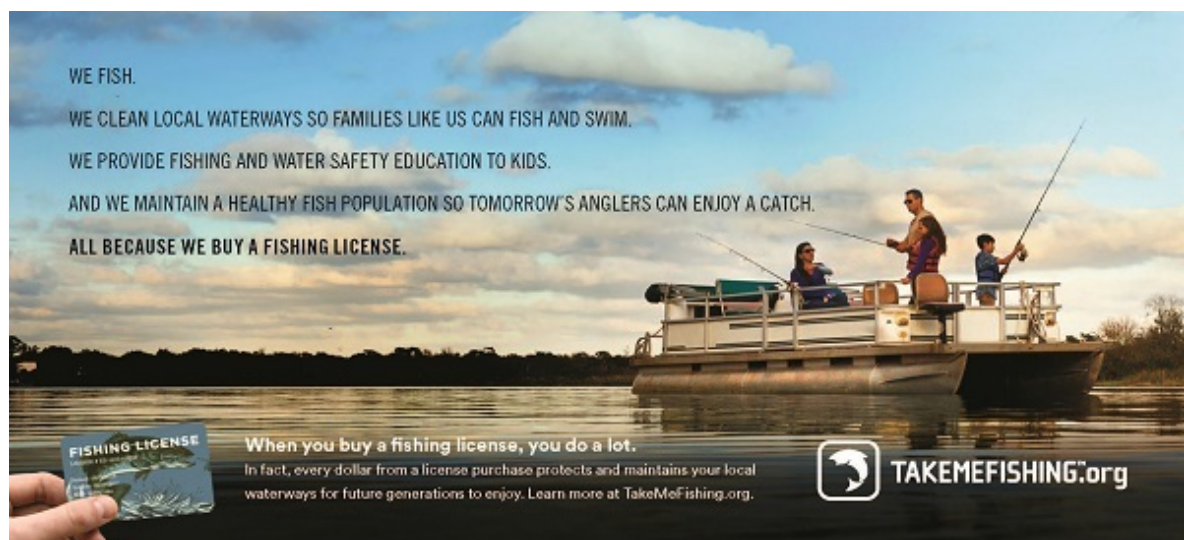
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## Three Mile Lake

Main lake is ice free. Still some ice south and north of the main ramp.


Small ponds and lakes are ice free in the Mount Ayr district. Larger lakes are mostly ice free, but still have some areas of ice. For more information, contact the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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WE CLEAN LOCAL WATERWAYS SO FAMILIES LIKE US CAN FISH AND SWIM.  
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