



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

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[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 19](#)

Given Iowa's current State of Emergency, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has made adjustments to protect the health and safety of state employees, the public, and the angling community.

All Spring Community Trout stockings and family events have been cancelled to minimize crowds in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Trout will still be stocked this spring at [these locations](#), but the date and time will not be announced. All trout stream stockings will continue, but will be unannounced.

But that doesn't mean you can't go fishing -- we encourage small fishing groups of 10 or fewer people per CDC recommendations for social distancing.

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](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Courtesy docks are in at all boat ramps. Anglers are catching panfish in Town Bay using crawlers and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching perch in Town Bay. Some sorting is needed. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching bluegill in Town Bay.

[North Raccoon River \(above State Highway 175 bridge near Auburn\)](#)

Walleye fishing has been productive this week, but will likely slow down with rising water levels this weekend. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing has been productive. Target walleye in areas below riffles and in deeper pools.

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

Fishing has been productive this week. Storm Lake has a daily limit of 3 walleye and all 17- to 22-inch walleye must be released; and no more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use crawlers and minnows on a small jig fished from shore and in the marina. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing has been productive. Anglers have had luck from shore and in the marina. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Target catfish from shore using cut bait fished on the bottom.

For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

The main lake is about 70 percent open. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use a dead chub fished on the bottom. **Walleye** - Slow: Wader fishing is picking up. **Yellow Bass** – Fair.

Lower Pine Lake

Lower Pine Lake is free of ice. The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp. No fishing activity to report.

Upper Pine Lake

Upper Pine Lake is mostly free of ice. The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp. No fishing activity to report.

Winnebago River

Northern Pike - Fair: Northern pike are being caught below the dams.

Ice conditions have deteriorated with the warm temperatures. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Area Rivers are up, but the fishing should improve as water levels drop. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

Center Lake

The aeration system has been turned off. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. But there is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult.

East Okoboji Lake

The Walleye Season is closed. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult, with only a couple available boat ramps. **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

The aeration system has been turned off. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult.

Lost Island Lake

Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The aeration system has been turned off. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult.

Spirit Lake

The Walleye Season is closed. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult, with only a couple available boat ramps. **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

Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult. **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. Much of the lake ice has melted, making ice fishing near impossible. There is still enough ice intact to make boat navigation difficult, with minimal available boat ramps. **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 conditions have deteriorated significantly and made ice fishing near impossible. Many area lakes have

opened up significantly, allowing for open water fishing in certain areas. Aeration systems at Center Lake, Silver Lake (near Lake Park), and Ingham Lake have been turned off. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

The Cedar River has stabilized and cleared. Conditions may change, depending on precipitation amounts north over the next few days. **Walleye** - Good: Anglers using crawlers and minnows are doing well below dams. Anglers are catching a good number of small walleye mixed with keeper-size. **Channel Catfish** - Good: With ice-out, find windward shores to fish. Use chunks of dead chubs or other dead fish.

Decorah District Streams

Gravel roads are soft as the frost goes out. Stream clarity is improving. Trout stream stocking start the week of April 1. All trout stream stockings will be unannounced due to COVID-19 precautions. Get some fresh air and explore a new stream. Hatchery grounds are open to the public, but feeders and other conveniences are temporarily closed for prevention precautions. **Brook Trout** - Good: Midges and small mayflies are hatching on warmer sunny days. Use flies imitating insects hatching. **Brown Trout** - Excellent: Off-color water will turn brown trout on. Strong midge hatches are occurring. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. Use a fly imitating a midge emerging from its exoskeleton. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair:: With muddy water, use a worm or cheese floated through a pool under a bobber. Use an ultra-light pole and reel for fun action.

Lake Hendricks

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

Lake Meyer

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice has totally pulled away from the shore.

Turkey River (above Clermont)

Water levels are stabilizing and clarity is improving. Water temperatures are in the mid 40's. **Walleye** - Good: Use worms or minnows fished below dams or other impoundments.

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

Water levels are stabilized and clarity is improving. **Walleye** - Good: Find fish below dams as water warms. Use worms and minnows; also try flashy spoons and spinners.

[Volga Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice has pulled away from the shore. Water is pooled on top of the ice.

Area rivers have stabilized and clarity is improving. Precipitation forecast for this weekend may change conditions. Air temperatures will fall through the weekend. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

Reports of anglers catching a few walleye, smallmouth bass and channel catfish on the Cedar River. Catfish fishing is really good above the dam in Waverly. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve live or artificial baits along eddies and current breaks. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Cast and retrieve live or artificial baits along eddies, current breaks and areas of rip-rap banks and shores. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Try fishing dead minnows or cut baits along the seams or edges of current breaks in two to four feet of water.

Manchester District Streams

There has been recent angler activity on Spring Branch Creek; this is a [special regulation trout stream](#).

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

Reports of anglers catching walleye on the Maquoketa River. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve live or artificial baits along eddies and current breaks.

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

We didn't received any information about fishing on the Shell Rock River this week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve live or artificial baits along eddies and current breaks.

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

Good reports a week ago on the Wapsipinicon River for northern pike. Only a few reports of walleye being caught. **Northern Pike** - Good: Float live chubs or shiners under a

bobber in slack water areas off of main current. Try also bucktail spinners or other spinner baits. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve live or artificial baits along eddies and current breaks.

It's a great time to distance yourself from others by getting outdoors and supporting your local bait shop owners. Interior rivers are up, but are in respectable condition. Reports of anglers catching walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass and channel catfish. Trout streams will be hit-and-miss with the expected rainfall over the coming week. 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 11.3 feet and is expected to reach 13 feet this week. Open water fishing below the dams will be a challenge with swift currents. **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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a small piece of crawler fished from shore.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lyxville has risen to 21 feet and will hit 23 feet this week. Open water fishing below the dams will be a challenge with swift currents. **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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a small piece of crawler fished from shore.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level at Guttenberg has risen to 12.5 feet and is expected to reach 15 feet this week. Open water fishing below the dams will be a challenge with swift currents. **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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on a feed frenzy to prepare for

spawning. Fish the warmer shallows in backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a small piece of crawler fished from shore.

Upper Mississippi River levels are still rising this week. Ice has gone out quickly, with rising flood waters. Locks are wide open. Anglers are open water fishing at the dams; expect high water, debris and swift current. Water temperature is near 40 degrees.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 12.4 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 14.4 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to rise to action and moderate flood stages. The water temperature is 42 degrees. Water clarity is still decent. **Sauger** - Good: It was a good spring bite with anglers reporting all sizes of sauger being taken. Water is getting higher; anglers are concentrating more toward the shorelines away from the strongest currents. **Walleye** - Good: Lots of nice slot walleyes reported this spring; the fishery looks to be very healthy. Floating debris is starting to be an issue at times with anglers pulling crankbaits. **Northern Pike** - Good: Some northern pike are being taken using large spinners and cut bait in backwater areas. Pike are about to spawn in the Mississippi River.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is 13 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. The water temperature is 42 degrees. Water clarity is good. The DNR boat ramp at Bellevue is difficult to launch from due to high water levels. **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. **Walleye** - Good: Lots of nice slot walleyes reported this spring; the fishery looks to be very healthy. Floating debris is starting to be an issue at times with anglers pulling crankbaits. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Water levels are starting to get high, making it difficult to find paddlefish in the stronger currents. See page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for paddlefish regulations.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 12.2 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 14.8 feet at Camanche and 8.5 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 42 degrees. River levels are rising and will reach action and moderate flood stages by the end of the week. **Sauger** - Fair: It was a good spring bite with anglers reporting all sizes of sauger being taken. Water is getting

higher; anglers are concentrating more to toward the shorelines away from the strongest currents. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Some paddlefish were taken this week, despite the higher water levels. Strong current flow is limiting snagging of paddlefish. 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. Lots of nice slot walleyes reported this spring; the fishery looks to be very healthy. Floating debris is starting to be an issue at times with anglers pulling crankbaits.

Mississippi River Pool 15

Water level is around 12.6 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is around 43 degrees. Water is stained.

Flooding is returning to the district. Water levels are rising with recent rains and thaw. Part of the district will experience moderate flooding by the end of the week. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 12.59 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 15 feet by Monday. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. Docks have been pulled out of the water at the Marquette St boat ramp. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 11.85 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 14.7 feet by next Wednesday. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. River stage is 13.53 feet at Muscatine and is forecast to reach 16 feet by Monday. Flood stage is 16 feet at Muscatine. The ramp at Big Timber is closed. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 13.33 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 15 feet by Monday and 16 feet by Wednesday. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. River stage is 13.13 feet at Keithsburg; flood stage is 14 feet. The Toolsboro ramp is closed

due to high water. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 9.44 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 10.1 feet by Saturday and 11.7 feet by Wednesday. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 14.51 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage Madison is 527.67 feet at Fort; flood stage is 528 feet. We have not received any fishing reports or ramp condition reports for this pool.

Current forecasts have the river reaching flood stage over the weekend or by early next week. Main channel water temperature is around 41-42 degrees. Some boat ramps have closed due to the high water. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Open water. The docks are in at the boat ramps. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: It's a good time to fish for catfish along the face of the dam. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Start at the lower end of the lake on the north side where the water is more open to the sunlight and work the points that stick out into the lake.

Lake Belva Deer

Ice free. Docks are always in. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: A good place to try for early season bass is along the north side shorelines at the upper end of the lake where there is a rocky bottom.

Lake Darling

Open water. Warm nights and the rain have raised the water temperature to 46 degrees. Docks at ramps are not in yet. **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. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: One of the few boats out caught a few bass while fishing the bays where the wind was blowing warm water into them.

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

A little over 2.5 inches of rain in the last week has made a lot of these ponds muddy, but that helps keep the lake clearer.

Lost Grove Lake

Open water. Boat docks at the ramps won't be in for a while yet. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: It's a good time to fish for catfish along the face of the dam as they look for any fish that didn't make it through the winter.

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

Coralville Reservoir

The Corps has started to lower the lake to spring pool. As of March 19, the lake level is 680.5 feet. It is predicted to reach spring pool of 679.5 feet on April 1. Boating is not recommended for most above Lake Macbride ramp at spring pool. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use cut bait around the 380/965 bridges. Shallow windblown bays can also be good.

Diamond Lake

The dock/kayak launch are in. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish have been caught off the jetties. Try small jigs tipped with worms or waxworms.

Lake Macbride

Surface temperatures are in the low 40's. The docks will be put in for the first weekend in April. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish are being caught east of the causeway, especially on warmer days. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Some fish have been caught on dead shad in the upper ends of the lake. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Fish windblown banks where shad may be found. **Muskellunge** - Slow: Try bass-sized jerk baits.

Pleasant Creek Lake

Some anglers have been out. No fishing reports are available.

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

Lake Miami

Anglers are catching some largemouth bass along the shore.

Lake Sugema

Use nightcrawlers to catch catfish.

Lake Wapello

Catch catfish with nightcrawlers or cut bait.

Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

The trout event for Saturday, March 28th has been cancelled due to concerns of COVID-19. Trout will still be stocked this spring, but it will be unannounced to reduce crowd size.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.56 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** - Good: Use nightcrawlers on windblown shores.

Red Haw Lake

Anglers are catching largemouth bass along the shore. The docks have been put in.

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.

SOUTHWEST

Big Creek Lake

Walleye - Fair: Catch walleyes when water temperatures warm into the mid to upper 40s in late March to early April. Use jigs tipped with plastics or live minnows in the evenings along rocky shores. Target the face of the dam, the first few hundred yards of the canal leading to the spillway and the East Boat ramp shore.

Boone District Farm Ponds

Black Crappie - Fair: Many of the [community fishing ponds](#) spread throughout the Des Moines Metro will offer a good early season crappie, bluegill and bass bite; they

warm faster than the larger lakes. Use live bait under floats or slowly retrieve twister tail and swimbaits. If a pond has any rock shore, try there first. [Fish Local](#) signs mark which ponds are open to public fishing.

[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.

For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Greenfield Lake](#)

Greenfield is a good lake to catch ice-out catfish. It also gives anglers a chance to catch a trophy-size channel catfish. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Fish shad sides on the wind-blown shore, especially in the upper end of the lake where water warms sooner.

[Lake Anita](#)

Lake Anita can provide good fishing this time of year. Fish will move into the upper end of the lake as water temperatures warm. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Early crappie fishing can be very good on warm sunny days behind the pontoon boats. Cast a minnow two feet under a bobber with a slow retrieve.

[Lake Manawa](#)

It's time to target channel catfish at Lake Manawa. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Fish the windblown shores with shad sides or cut bait to catch channel catfish of all sizes.

For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Walleye - Slow: Use jigs tipped with live bait fished near main lake points for walleyes up to 22 inches.

Lakes are 100% ice free. Water temperature in most Mount Ayr district lakes is in the mid to upper 40's. For more information, contact the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-

464-3108.



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