



March Fishing Podcast

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 11](#)

If you're headed out fishing, please do your part to keep yourself and others safe by following COVID-19 public health and safety guidelines. Go fishing only if you're feeling well. Practice proper social distancing (at least 6 feet away from people who don't live in your household) and keep a face covering handy for when social distancing cannot be maintained. Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer.

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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- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is open. A few anglers have picked up bluegill and crappie in Town Bay since it opened up. More reports will be available as we receive them. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

[Black Hawk Pit](#)

Black Hawk Pits are ice-free.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake has just recently opened up; **unsafe ice conditions**.

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

As of March 11th, most of the main lake is still covered with ice; **unsafe ice conditions**. The Marina is open. Anglers are starting to fish in the marina.

Many lakes in the district are ice-free, except for a few larger water bodies. **Unsafe ice conditions**. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: Trout are biting on a variety of baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

[Clear Lake](#)

There are many areas of open water. Any remaining ice is deteriorating quickly; **unsafe ice conditions**. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Wader fish open pockets in the rushes. **Bluegill** - Fair: Wader fish open pockets in the rushes.

[Lower Pine Lake](#)

There is no open water on Upper or Lower Pine Lake; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[Upper Pine Lake](#)

There is no open water on Upper or Lower Pine Lake; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[Winnebago River](#)

The northern pike bite should pick up; try fishing a chub in slack water below dams and where smaller creeks enter the river.

Ice conditions are rapidly deteriorating on all area waterbodies with the warm temperatures and high winds. **Ice fishing is not recommended**. 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](#)

Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[East Okoboji Lake](#)

The walleye season is closed. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**

Ingham Lake

Ice conditions have deteriorated; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Lost Island Lake

Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Spirit Lake

The walleye season is closed. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**. Yellow Perch – Fair.

West Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is closed. Ice conditions have deteriorated significantly; **unsafe ice conditions**.

The walleye season is closed on Spirit, East Okoboji and West Okoboji Lake. Ice fishing is not recommended. Recent warm temperatures have quickly deteriorated much of the ice in the area. The extended forecast calls for continued warm temperatures with highs in the 40s and 50s. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions in impoundments on the river are rapidly declining. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Water is sitting on top of ice and is pulling away from shoreline. Ice is out of main channel and below dams. Water is dirty. **Walleye** - Slow: Anglers are fishing below dams with some success; use live bait.

Decorah District Streams

Much of the snow melted this week with warmer weather and rain. Many streams are off-color, but will clear depending on the quality of the watershed. Gravel roads are messy and rutted. Trout stocking season starts April 1. All catchable trout stockings will be unannounced due to COVID-19 precautions. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Get tackle in front of fish and imitate prey movements. Minnow worm midge and caddis flies work well this time of year. **Brown Trout** - Good: Meltwater inputs on warmer days will spur a bite. Use tackle imitating forage fish or midges; fish the edge of a weed bed or large rock. **Brook Trout** - Slow: Try flies imitating prey drifting down in pool edges and heads. Fish the hatch on sunny afternoons.

Lake Hendricks

Ice conditions are rapidly declining. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice is pulling away from shoreline and opening more around aerator due to wave action from wind.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Ice conditions are rapidly declining. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice is pulling away from shoreline; a frost heave is running the length of the lake.

[Volga Lake](#)

Ice conditions are rapidly declining and pulling away from shoreline. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Ice conditions are rapidly declining on all area waterbodies with the recent warm-up and rainfall. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Area river water levels are up; clarity is poor with ice mainly on impounded areas. Mixed precipitation forecast for Saturday night into Monday with highs into low 50's to upper 20's. To reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species, throw unused bait in the trash. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

The Cedar River is mostly open with recent warm temperatures. Anglers are getting after walleyes with success. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow. Concentrate on pools and current breaks.

Manchester District Streams

All area Manchester trout streams are dropping from recent snowmelt and should be in good shape by the upcoming weekend. **Brown Trout** - Good: [Spring Branch Creek](#) is a favorite amongst anglers for quality and trophy-sized brown trout.

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

The Maquoketa River in Delaware County remains high and muddy after recent snowmelt.

[Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#) The Shell Rock River is mostly open; reports of anglers catching a few walleyes. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow. Concentrate on pools and current breaks.

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

The river has stabilized after the recent runoff. Reports of anglers catching northern pike on the Wapsipinicon River. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast and retrieve large spinnerbaits or fish a live shiner or chub under a bobber near off-channel areas.

Ice conditions are deteriorating quickly with the recent warmer temperatures. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Rivers are starting to open. Anglers are beginning to pick up a few walleyes. For further information contact your area bait and tackle shops. All field stations and fish hatcheries remain closed. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level at Lansing has risen to 8.5 feet and is predicted to rise another foot by late

next week. Use caution; **shoreline edges are unsafe**. Boat ramp at Genoa is open, but some ice chunks still floating down. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use bright colored jigs tipped with waxworms in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike will be starting to feed in pre-spawn stages. Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in shallow backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Use tip-ups baited with minnows in backwaters. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite is best in shallow backwaters fishing just below the ice surface.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Lynxville water level is 616.3 feet and is expected to rise 2 feet over the next week. Use caution; **shoreline edges are unsafe**. Lynxville still had ice chunks coming down as of March 11. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Slow: Use jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use bright colored jigs tipped with waxworms in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike will be starting to feed in pre-spawn stages. Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in warm and shallow backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use tip-ups baited with minnows in backwaters. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite is best in shallow backwaters fishing just below the ice surface.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is 8.1 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to rise to 11 feet by late next week. Use caution; **shoreline edges are unsafe**. Iowa DNR ramp and the Landing are open. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Slow: Use jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use bright colored jigs tipped with waxworms in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike will be starting to feed in pre-spawn stages. Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in warm and shallow backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Use tip-ups baited with minnows in backwaters. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie bite is best in shallow backwaters fishing just below the ice surface.

Main channel is starting to break up with a lot of ice chunks floating down. Backwater ice anglers should use caution; ice has deteriorated and water levels are rising. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches long must be released immediately. Only one walleye greater than 27 inches can be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily harvest limit of 6 and possession of 12.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is expected to rise this week. Water levels are 8.4 feet at the Lock and Dam and 10.7 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Bluegill** - Good: Most ice fishing in backwater lakes has been eliminated

with the warm weather, but pockets remain. **Walleye** - Slow: The ramp at Hawthorne is open, but ice packs have been coming through occasionally. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Reports of lots of late ice yellow perch.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is 9.7 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. The Bellevue City ramp may have some large ice chunks around the ramp; it is open to launch. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice fishing for gills and other panfish was picking up, but the warm weather eliminated most of the ice fishing spots. **Paddlefish** - Good: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). **Walleye** - Slow: Most anglers are pulling a minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is rising at 9.5 feet, 12.3 feet at Camanche and 7.2 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice fishing for bluegills really picked up during the warmer weather, but most of the ice fishing spots were eliminated. **Paddlefish** - Good: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). **Walleye** - Slow: Most anglers are pulling a minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is 10.3 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is near 33 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Water temperature in the main channel is around 33 degrees. Water level is rising throughout the district. Lots of changes on the river with all the melting. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 10.44 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has risen close to 3 feet since last weekend. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 10.9 feet by the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. The Marquette St. boat ramp is open. Anglers will have to access the ramp at Gaines St. by Modern Woodmen Park. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the dam or Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.24 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has risen close to 3 feet since last weekend. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 9.8 feet over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The ramp at Muscatine is open; some anglers were out tailwater fishing earlier this week. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rising river conditions. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with

minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 11.24 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 12.6 feet by the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The gates at the Lock and Dam are out of the water. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow with the rising river conditions. The Toolsboro landing is open. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.47 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 8.5 feet by the weekend. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 12.01 feet at Burlington and is forecast to reach 13.2 feet over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet at Burlington. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Slow: Tailwater fishing for saugers has been slow with the rising river levels. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleye fishing below the dam has been slow with the rising river levels.

Tailwater stages have been on the rise. Tailwater stages have risen close to 3 feet since last weekend. Water clarity is poor. Some boats out have been out tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers. **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](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Rotten ice is all around the edges; at least one person has gotten wet. Open water areas are growing in size.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. The inlets are all open and running water. More open water every day.

[Lake Darling](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Nearly all of the shoreline ice is gone; the upper ends and the north side is completely open. The boat ramps remain iced in.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

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

Diamond Lake

The edges of the lake are thawing; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Cedar River (La Porte City to Cedar Rapids)

The river has opened up; **unsafe ice conditions in the backwaters**.

Coralville Reservoir

The lake is mostly ice-free, other than the coves. The Corps will not drop the level to spring pool and it will remain at summer pool of 683 feet. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Some fish are being caught at the upper end of the lake, mostly around the 218 bridge. Use dead shad or cut bait. Windblown flats can also be good this time of year.

Hannen Lake

Most of the lake is still ice covered; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

The edges are thawing; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Iowa River (Marshalltown to Coralville Lake)

The river has opened up and is at normal conditions.

Lake Macbride

As of March 11, the lake is 95 percent ice covered, but it is getting dark and slushy; **unsafe ice conditions**. There is a sizable area east of the causeway and along the dam where shoreline fishing is possible.

Otter Creek Lake

The shorelines are thawing; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Pleasant Creek Lake

The edges are starting to thaw; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Rodgers Park Lake

Most of the lake is still ice covered; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Union Grove Lake

The dam end of the lake is open due to the aeration system; shoreline fishing in that area is possible. The remaining lake has ice; **unsafe ice conditions**.

Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

The river has opened up; **unsafe ice conditions in the backwaters**. Some ramps are open, but some remain closed due to soft road conditions.

Unsafe ice conditions in the Lake Macbride District. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Chariton River (below Rathbun Lake)

Outlet Park at the Rathbun Outlet is closed to the public until March 18th so the Corp of Engineers can inspect the outlet structure.

Hawthorn Lake

The lake is open water.

Lake Miami

The lake is ice-free. Target channel catfish right after ice-out.

Lake Sugema

The lake is open water.

Lake Wapello

The lake is open water. Target channel catfish after ice-out.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.40 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. The lake is open water. Target channel catfish along windblown shorelines. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody.

Red Haw Lake

The lake is ice-free.

The lakes in south central Iowa are now 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.

SOUTHWEST

Big Creek Lake

As of March 10, Big Creek Lake was mostly open water with some ice remaining in coves. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Channel catfish are feeding on winter-killed gizzard shad as the ice goes off. Bottom fish dead shad from shore on the wind-blown side of the lake. The shallower shorelines on the upper half of the lake are the best to target.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: Through March, catch walleyes below the dams from Saylorville to below Red Rock. Cast jigs tipped with twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Catch pike below the dams and near the mouths of creeks entering the river. Cast jigs tipped with twister tails or swimbaits.

As of March 10, Central Iowa ponds and lakes were mostly to completely ice-free. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Big Lake (Including Gilbert's Pond)

Trout will be stocked in Big Lake as soon as the ice goes off. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Greenfield Lake

Channel Catfish - No Report: Greenfield has a good population of channel catfish of all sizes. After the ice goes out is a good time to target catfish.

Lake Manawa

Manawa is a good destination for ice-out catfish. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Channel catfish are actively feeding on winter-killed fish. Target catfish on wind-blown shorelines with shad sides.

Littlefield Lake

Littlefield is ice-free. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Target channel catfish with shad sides or cut bait. Littlefield has a good catfish population.

Lakes are ice-free. For more information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Three Mile Lake

The lake is ice-free. Courtesy docks are installed at main boat ramp.

Mount Ayr district lakes are ice-free. Surface water temperature is about 45 degrees. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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