



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 18](#)

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.

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## **NORTHWEST**

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. The courtesy dock is in at the Ice House Point boat ramp. **Black**

**Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig with a small minnow in Town Bay and along Ice House Point. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: After ice-out can be a good time to target channel catfish. Use cut bait or shad fished on the bottom along any windblown shoreline where catfish may be aggressively feeding.

### [Black Hawk Pit](#)

Black Hawk Pits are ice-free.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Water levels remain about 4-5 feet low. Courtesy docks are not in at this time. The west ramp is the best option to launch a boat with the low water. Reports of anglers catching perch with crawlers. Shortly after ice-out can be a good time to target crappie, perch, or channel catfish. More open water angling reports will be available as we receive them.

### [Des Moines River \(Humboldt to Stratford\)](#)

Anglers are picking up walleye and channel catfish.

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

**Walleye** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** – Fair.

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

The lake is ice-free. Anglers have picked up perch and crappie in the marina. More reports will be available as we receive them. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Right after ice-out is a great time to target the abundant channel catfish population that Storm Lake has to offer. Use cut bait or gizzard shad fished on the bottom along any windblown shoreline.

Lakes in the district are ice-free. Open water anglers are starting to make their way out. River fishing for walleye and channel catfish has been productive. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [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](#)

The lake is about 75 percent open. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Wader fish open pockets in the rushes. **Bluegill** - Fair: Wader fish open pockets in the rushes. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a piece of cut bait fished off the bottom.

### [Lake Cornelia](#)

The lake is ice-free. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a piece of cut bait fished off the bottom.

### [Lower Pine Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. The courtesy dock is in at the boat ramp. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a piece of cut bait fished on the bottom.

### Upper Pine Lake

The lake is mostly ice-free.

### 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.

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 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.** Most of the area ice has deteriorated significantly with total ice-out expected in the next week or so. The extended forecast calls for continued warm temperatures with highs in the 40's and 50's.

For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## **NORTHEAST**

### 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** - Fair: [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 is slowly dropping, but should be good for fishing by this coming weekend.

### [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. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve jig and plastics tipped with or without a minnow. Concentrate on pools and current breaks.

Ice fishing season is officially over. Interior rivers are starting to open. Anglers are beginning to pick up a few walleyes. Trout streams are in excellent condition due to the slow melting of the last snowfall event. 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 9.3 feet and is predicted to rise slightly late next week. Water temperature is 38 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch hanging above vegetation from 4-12 feet of water with a jig and minnow. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish are moving into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels. **Walleye** – Fair. **Sauger** – Fair.

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

Water level at Lynxville has risen to 618.8 feet and is expected to rise slightly over the next week. Water temperature is 40 degrees at Lynxville dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: 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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish are moving into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels.

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

Water level at Guttenberg has risen to 10.5 feet and is expected to rise slightly over the next week. Water temperature is 37 degrees at the Guttenberg dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: 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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike fishing will pick up again post-spawn. Try flashy spoons along openings of backwater lakes as fish are moving into the vegetation. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie bite will pick up post ice-out. Fish submerged trees in backwaters and side channels.

Upper Mississippi River levels are rising. Water temperature is near 38 degrees. Main channel ice has broken up; **backwaters are unsafe for ice fishing**. 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.

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

Water level is expected to rise this week. Water levels are 9.7 feet at the Lock and Dam and 11.8 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 36 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice is out in most backwater lakes. **Walleye** - Fair: Ramps are ice-free. Walleye fishing has picked up from a slow start. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Reports of lots of late ice yellow perch. Expect to catch some large perch in newly thawed backwater lakes.

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

The water level is 10.6 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. Water temperature is around 36 degrees. Water clarity is good. The Bellevue City ramp may have a few random chunks of floating ice. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice has been eliminated from most backwater lakes; little fishing is taking place. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). As the water has risen, paddlefish have dispersed a bit. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are pulling a minnow rig. The bite is picking up from a slow spring start.

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

Water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is rising at 9.9 feet, 12.8 feet at Camanche and 7.6 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 36 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice has been eliminated in nearly all backwater lakes. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is open; [check snagging rules before you go out](#). As water has risen, the catch of paddlefish is reduced as the fish are scattered. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are pulling a minnow rig. The bite has improved from a slow spring start.

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

Water level is 10.8 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is near 36 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Water temperature in the main channel is around 36 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.

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

Tailwater stage is 10.75 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to reach 12.4 feet over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. The Marquette St. boat ramp is open. **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 9.83 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to reach 12.0 feet over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. The ramp at Muscatine is open. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rising river 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 11.45 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 13.6 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 will likely be closed soon due to rising river levels. **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 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.75 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 9.8 feet by the weekend. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 12.98 feet at Burlington and is forecast to reach 14.7 feet over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet at Burlington. **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. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## SOUTHEAST

### Big Hollow Lake

The lake is ice-free.

### Lake Belva Deer

The lake lost the last of its ice late last week. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch catfish near where the marsh dumps in and in the campground arm of the lake.

### Lake Darling

The lake is ice-free. Docks are not in yet. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Anglers are catching catfish along the in-lake silt dams and up a little into Honey Creek.

### Lost Grove Lake

The lake is ice-free; last week's winds took out the last of the ice. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Find catfish working the rocky points where the wind is blowing into shore.

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

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### Hawthorn Lake

The lake is open water.

### Lake Miami

The lake is ice-free. Target channel catfish this time of year.

### Lake Sugema

The lake is open water.

### Lake Wapello

The lake is open water. Target channel catfish with nightcrawlers.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.12 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. The lake is open water. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Target windblown shorelines with shad sides or nightcrawlers.

### Red Haw Lake

The boat docks are in. Target channel catfish with nightcrawlers.

The lakes in south central Iowa are ice-free. 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

### [Banner Lake \(south\)](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout were stocked on March 18. Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

**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.

Target the shallower shorelines on the upper half of the lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Jig or troll minnows in areas from the marina around to the beach, the east boat ramp bay and the west boat ramp bay.

### [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.

### [Terra Lake](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Trout were stocked on March 17. Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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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### [Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Rainbow trout were stocked this week. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast small spinners, spoons, jigs with plastics or live bait under a bobber. 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** - Good: 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 the main boat ramp.

Mount Ayr district lakes are ice-free. Surface water temperature is about 40 degrees. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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