



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 10](#)

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](#)

Unsafe ice; ice has degraded.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Most of the lake has opened up. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Unsafe ice; ice has degraded.

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

There is a large area of open water around the big island near the south part of the lake. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

Many area lakes are beginning to open up. Any remaining ice is unsafe. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Clear Lake

Use caution if fishing near the winter aeration systems. Ice conditions change fast in these areas. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie have been caught in a variety of locations using small spoons and jigs. Best bite is dawn and dusk, but some can be caught throughout the day. **Walleye** – Good: Use a jigging spoon tipped with minnow heads and live minnows fished below bobbers. Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. No more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use small jigs and spoons around vegetation.

### Lake Cornelia

Ice is still okay for foot traffic. Ice conditions will change rapidly with the forecast temperatures next week.

### Rice Lake

**Bluegill** – Fair: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms and maggots. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Try small jigs or spoons tipped with insect larvae or minnow heads. Sorting is needed to get the keeper-sized fish.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Use caution if fishing near the winter aeration system.

Ice conditions can change fast with warming temperatures. Check ice conditions often and use safety precautions when out on late season ice. 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 around 11 inches. There is a large open hole where the aeration unit had been running throughout the winter.

### East Okoboji Lake

Most of the lake is fully iced with an average of 14+ inches of ice allowing for safe ATV traffic in most areas. Be cautious of open holes, seams and access points. Panfishing has been good out from the Ritz; some sorting is needed. Try heavy tungsten jigs, plastics and baits. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Yellow Bass** - Good: With a little movement on the basin, you should be able find a decent bite and also catch a few other species.

### Ingham Lake

Ice conditions very heavily around the lake; most areas have 12 inches. There is a large open hole where the lake aeration unit had been running this winter. I

### Lost Island Lake

Ice conditions vary with an average of around 12 inches. **Caution:** The aeration system is currently in operation on the east side of the lake out from the nature center. This creates a large open hole in the ice. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of sorting may be needed.

### Minnewashta Lake

Ice conditions are safe enough to venture with ATVs with an average ice thickness of 14 inches. The panfish and crappie bite has been fairly good. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A nice crappie bite can be found with a little movement around the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair.

### Scharnberg Pond

Trout were stocked this winter; fish should be biting well. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Brook Trout** - Good. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout are biting on a variety of different baits. Try a worm or lure that imitates a minnow.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is around 12 inches. The lake has a large open hole along the eastern side; the eastern access is very diminished. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Spirit Lake

Ice thickness is 14+ inches in most places. There is a large open hole on the southwest side due to strong winds and a few days of warmer temperatures. The Marble Beach access is in very poor condition due to ice heaving along the shoreline. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Walleye** - Slow: Season is closed until May 7th. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### West Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is 14+ inches in most places; there still are a handful of seams usually running from points. Know where trouble areas are before you venture on or off the ice. Panfishing has slowed a bit; with a little movement on the north end near Triboji, Emerson and Smiths Bay you may be able to catch a good amount of fish. Try heavy tungsten jigs, plastics or baits. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Bluegill** - Fair: Many anglers have been successful off Triboji on the north end of the lake. Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait.

**The walleye season for the Iowa Great Lake chain is closed. The season opens back up May 7th.** Most area lakes have 14+ inches of ice. Ice conditions are relatively safe in most areas; access around many lakes has diminished. Ice fishing season may not be around for much longer; the extended forecast calls for a week filled with warmer temperatures which will significantly diminish ice throughout the area. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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# NORTHEAST

## Cedar River (above Nashua)

Open water below dams and ice jams are more common as rivers begin to swell. Unsafe ice in areas with flow. Check ice thickness often. A variety of fish are being caught in areas with open water. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish are start to look for food floating their way. Try a hook loaded with a crawler. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike are on the move looking for good spawning grounds as ice melts and water warms. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Smallies are showing up below dams. Use a nightcrawler. **Walleye** - Fair: Try worms under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near bottom. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

## **Decorah District Streams**

Higher flows; stream clarity is improving from recent rain and snowmelt. Gravel roads are thawing; usually better in morning until the sun warms the ground. Use care when walking from site to site as ground conditions are highly variable from ice to mush. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Insect hatches are starting to take place on sunny afternoons. Use midge, minnow or scud patterns for fish looking to get more bang for their effort. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Melt water flowing into streams is bringing a fresh supply of foods for curious brownies. Try spinner or crankbaits near or around structure. Also try flies that look fishy. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Rainbow Trout are teasing anglers with soft strikes and nudges. Use small spinnerbaits, hair jigs or hooks tipped with imitation eggs floating past structure.

## Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is about 10 inches. Water clarity is excellent to 9 feet. Areas around the aerator remain open; use caution. Angling picked up this week. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try fishing in the sharp drop-offs. Finicky crappies may bite as you slowly raise the lure. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm or spike fished near structure.

## Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 16 inches. Water is off-color with recent rain and snow melt. Fish activity has slowed. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Be prepared to change lures often to trick those educated fish. **Bluegill** – Slow: Catching all sizes of bluegills. Anglers with cameras see lots of fish looking at bait, but not biting. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few nice-sized bass are finding their way into the creel.

## Volga Lake

Ice thickness is about 12 inches. Use caution when going on ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Bright colored ice jigs tipped with a waxworm works well, especially for light biters. **Bluegill** - Slow: Find fish around brush piles about 1-2 feet off the bottom.

Warming up this weekend with temperatures ranging from 20's to 50's. Friday starts cold with single digits in the morning. Ice thickness is 10+ inches on district lakes. Ice on rivers is starting to break up. Use caution when going on any waterbody; ice conditions can change fast. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### [Alice Wyth Lake](#)

Anglers are catching a few crappies; some sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find structure and use electronics to locate suspended fish. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or a minnow on a dead stick.

### [Brinker Lake](#)

Anglers are catching crappie; some sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Locate structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Try a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or a minnow on a dead stick.

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

Anglers are starting to catch a few walleye on the Cedar River. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast a jig tipped with plastic and a minnow. Keep your presentation slow and just off of the river bottom near current breaks or slack water areas.

### [George Wyth Lake](#)

Anglers are catching crappie; some sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Locate structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or a minnow on a dead stick.

### [Heritage Pond](#)

Trout were stocked in the fall; some of these stocked trout remain in the lake. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Try jigging flashy jigs with a blade to entice rainbow trout to take your lure or jig.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams are in excellent condition. Very clear water conditions; use subtle presentations and approach fish from downstream. Sunday could provide some runoff on our streams which can often be beneficial in catching brown trout. **Brown Trout** – Fair. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

### [Martens Lake](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill, crappie, northern pike, largemouth bass and some yellow perch. Move often to locate fish; spots are hit-and-miss. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Locate structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Try a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or a minnow on a dead stick. The few crappie being caught are quality-sized.

**Bluegill** - Good: Best bite is evenings or early mornings with small presentations. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try fishing tip-up rigs with a live shiner or chub. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching some 9- to 11-inch perch. Try a waxy on a jig or a jigging rapala.

### [North Prairie Lake](#)

Trout were stocked in the fall; some of these stocked trout remain in the lake. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Try jigging flashy jigs with a blade to entice rainbow trout to take your lure or jig.

Remain cautious while ice fishing with the warm forecast ahead; avoid areas with water current or discolored ice. Ice fishing remains slow in and around the Cedar

Falls/Waterloo area. Call area/local bait shops for the most up to date reports. Contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

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## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

Water levels rose to 8.7 feet this week. Ice conditions are changing daily. Use caution and avoid dark ice along shorelines and areas with current. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are drilling lots of holes and moving often to find bigger gills. Try a jig tipped with a waxworm in the weed edges of deeper backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to prepare for the March spawn. **White Crappie** - Good: The late ice crappie bite has picked up. Try minnows over woody structure in backwater lakes. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice perch bite has picked up; fish are becoming more active pre-spawn.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

Water levels rose a foot to 615.5 feet. Ice conditions are changing daily. Use caution and avoid dark ice along shorelines and areas with current. Avoid crossing the slough at Sny Magill; conditions have become unsafe. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are drilling lots of holes and moving often to find bigger gills. Try a jig tipped with a waxworm in the weed edges of deeper backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to prepare for the March spawn. **White Crappie** - Fair: The late ice crappie bite has picked up. Try minnows over woody structure in backwater lakes. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice fishing is picking up for perch on the pre-spawn bite.

### Mississippi River Pool 11

Water levels in the tailwater have risen over a foot to 7.8 feet. Ice conditions are changing daily. Use caution and avoid dark ice along shorelines and areas with current. The Guttenberg south boat ramps are free of ice and open. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are drilling lots of holes and moving often to find bigger gills. Try a jig tipped with a waxworm in the weed edges of deeper backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to prepare for the March spawn. **White Crappie** - Good: The late ice crappie bite has picked up. Try minnows over woody structure in backwater lakes. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice perch bite has picked up; fish are becoming more active.

Upper Mississippi River levels are bumping up this week. Ice is breaking up in main channel areas. Use caution on ice along shorelines and areas of current. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily limit 6/possession 12.

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

Water levels are 6.9 feet at the Lock and Dam and 9.3 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is poor. The water level is beginning to recede after a week of rising levels. Ice below the dam is starting to give way; boat ramps are still reported unusable. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Try using tip-downs in your favorite Pool 12 backwater. You may have to search a bit, but they can be caught. **Bluegill** - Slow: Poor catches have been reported; size has been small. Hopefully late ice will produce better results. **Sauger** - No Report: The ramps are iced in, but conditions are rapidly changing. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Expect to see more yellow perch; we have had excellent reproduction of yellow perch in the past few years.

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

The water level at the Bellevue Lock is receding at near 6.4 feet after a week of rising levels. The City of Bellevue Boat ramp is open, but ice flows at times make launching difficult. Water clarity is poor, but improving. **Black Crappie** - Good: Reports of nice catches of crappie. Use minnow rigs in 4 to 6 feet of water. Some backwaters will still have sufficient ice for fishing, but often the shoreline is treacherous. **Bluegill** - Slow: Reports of slow winter fishing with brief periods of decent bites. **Paddlefish** - Good: Paddlefish season is underway; review all [paddlefish rules](#) before angling in Iowa and Illinois waters. Contact the Bellevue Fisheries Management office or the local game wardens if you are uncertain of paddlefish snagging rules. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: The kids' trout pond just north of the DNR station has been stocked with rainbow trout for the winter. You can only keep two trout per child. **Sauger** - Slow: The Bellevue City boat ramp is open; fishing has been reported to be slow. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Ice out catches of yellow perch often are found in the tailwaters. Late ice can be a prime time for larger yellow perch in the backwater areas.

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

The water level is rising at 6.7 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 10.8 feet at Camanche and 5.7 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 34 degrees in the main channel. Water clarity is poor. Boat ramps are reported open, but subject to some ice flows. **Paddlefish** - No Report: Paddlefish season is underway; review all [paddlefish rules](#) before angling in Iowa and Illinois waters. Contact the Bellevue Fisheries Management office or the local game wardens if you are uncertain of paddlefish snagging rules. **Sauger** - Slow: Ramps are opening up soon; expect good conditions for early season sauger. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Lots of small perch are in the system; the future looks bright for yellow perch fishing in Pool 14. The tailwaters can be a great early spot for perch when the ice recedes.

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

The water level at Rock Island is receding at 5.7 feet. The water temperature is near 35 degrees. Water clarity is poor, but improving. **Bluegill** - No Report: Not a lot of backwater bluegill habitat exists on Pool 15 outside of marina areas.

Spring is slowly returning to the river with lots of migrating birds going north and ice flows going south. Some ice fishing continues in backwaters; have a safety plan as ice recedes in these habitats. The main channel water is low, but recent rains and snows

have dirtied the water some. If you have angling questions please call the Bellevue Fisheries Station at 563-880-8781.

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

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities has raised close to a foot to 7.62 feet. Tailwater stage is forecast to crest over the weekend. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers. **Sauger** - Fair: Some saugers have been caught below the Lock and Dam in the Quad Cities. Use hair jigs and minnows or nightcrawlers; mostly small saugers have been caught.

### [Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.19 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to crest over the weekend. Tailwater stage has raised close to a foot the past few days. Big Timber is free of ice. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. **Walleye** - Fair: Some anglers were out this past week. Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers.

### [Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.70 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has raised close to 1.5 feet the past few days. Tailwater stage is forecast to crest over the weekend. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers.

### [Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 3.74 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and raised close to a foot the past few days. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 4.2 feet over the weekend. We have not received any reports on tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Tailwater stages have been on the rise the past few days. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers below the Locks and Dams. Water clarity is fair. Water temperature is 33-34 degrees. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

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## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

Open water. The last of the ice went out last weekend.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Last weekend saw the end of the ice. Nearly all open water now.

### [Lake Darling](#)

Ice free after the storm moved through last Saturday.

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

Ice conditions around the shoreline are deteriorating; use caution getting on and off.

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

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### [Diamond Lake](#)

Unsafe ice.

### [Green Castle Lake](#)

Unsafe ice.

### [Iowa Lake \(Iowa Co.\)](#)

The lake is ice covered, but unsafe.

### [Lake Macbride](#)

The edges are poor quality. There has been almost no activity on the lake this week; use caution if venturing out. East of the causeway has deteriorated.

### [Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake is drained for a restoration project.

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The edges opened last week, but are refreezing this week. Only a couple ice anglers have been out this week. Use caution if venturing out.

### [Sand Lake](#)

Unsafe ice.

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. The south end of the lake is open due to the aeration system. Shorelines have deteriorated.

Most smaller lakes have unsafe ice; larger lakes have weak shorelines. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### [Hawthorn Lake](#)

Open water conditions.

### [Lake Miami](#)

Open water conditions. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try dead chubs around the shoreline.

### [Lake Sugema](#)

Open water conditions.

### Lake Wapello

Open water conditions.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.76 feet msl; 904 feet msl is recreation pool. Open water conditions with some ice still floating in the coves. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; make sure you properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: There is open water for most of the lake. Try dead chubs or shad sides for early ice out catfish.

### Red Haw Lake

Red Haw State Park is closed due to the damage from the tornado on March 5th.

Lakes are open water with some ice possibly floating around. 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

The lake is still mostly ice covered. There are small areas of open water and areas of thin ice. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Channel Catfish** - Fair: As ice recedes in the near future, catch channel catfish off wind-blown shorelines on the upper end of the lake with dead gizzard shad fished shallow in 2 to 6 feet of water

### Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

**Walleye** - Slow: The Des Moines River is open downstream of the Center Street dam. Catch walleye in March and April with twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows on jigs.

Central Iowa ponds and lakes have poor ice conditions. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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### Lake Anita

As water temperatures warm, the crappie bite picks up in the upper ends of the lake.

### Prairie Rose Lake

The lake is mostly ice free.

### Viking Lake

Viking lake is 5 feet low; access is compromised.

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

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### Three Mile Lake

The lake is 100 percent ice free. Courtesy docks are in place at the main ramp.

Mount Ayr district lakes are 100 percent ice free. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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