



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of April 7](#)

## April 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.

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## NORTHWEST

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Water levels are about 15 inches below the crest of the spillway. Water temperatures are in the low 40s. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie fishing has been productive recently; most fish are 8- to 12-inches. Use small live minnows and marabou jigs fished from shore in Town Bay. Areas along the stone Pier floating T dock, the fish house and along Ice House Point have been the most popular spots. Expect fishing to remain productive as the water warms with the predicted warmer temperatures over the weekend. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleye action has been slow with cooler water temperatures. The walleye bite usually turns on mid-April through early May. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are picking up some perch while targeting crappie with small live minnows and jigs. Some fish are 8- to 10 inches.

### Brushy Creek Lake

Courtesy docks are in. The fishing action has been slow with the cool water temperatures. Expect more panfish action as water temperatures warm the next couple of weeks.

### Des Moines River (Humboldt to Stratford)

**Channel Catfish** – Fair. **Smallmouth Bass** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

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

**Walleye** – Fair.

### North Twin Lake

Courtesy dock is in on the south ramp. With low water levels, boaters should use caution when launching boats to avoid the trailer tires travelling beyond the ends of the concrete ramps. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up crappie from shore with minnows and jigs. The recent cool temperatures have slowed the bite; expect the bite to return with warming temperatures the next couple of weeks.

### Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Water temperatures are in the low 40s. Anglers are fishing along shore and in the marina; the bite has slowed with the recent colder temperatures. **All walleye between 19 and 25-inches must be immediately released unharmed at Storm Lake; no more than one walleye longer than 25-inches can be taken per day.** **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use cut bait along shore. **Walleye** - Fair: A few walleye are starting to be picked up in the marina. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Anglers are catching keeper-sized yellow bass; bite is hit-or-miss. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use small minnows in the marina.

Water temperatures in most areas lakes have cooled into the low 40s. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Clear Lake

The lake is 3 inches low. Water temperatures are in the upper 30s. Courtesy docks are in at McIntosh, Ventura and Island boat ramps. **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.** **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Fish the wind swept shore with cut bait. **Walleye** - Fair: Try minnows and jigs fished off the Ventura jetties and in the cannels. Wader angler success will increase as water temperatures rise. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Anglers are catching a few fish from the Ventura jetties.

### Crystal Lake

The courtesy docks and fish cleaning station are in.

### Eldred Sherwood Lake

The courtesy docks are in.

### West Twin Lake

The courtesy docks are in.

### Winnebago River

It's the time of year to target **Northern Pike**. Fish a chub in the slack water below a dam or where a smaller stream enters the river. **Walleye** - Slow.

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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### East Okoboji Lake

The lake is ice free. Water temperature is in the mid-30s. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: With a little movement on the basin you should be able to get on a decent bite and also catch a few other species.

### Lost Island Lake

**Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of sorting may be needed.

### Minnewashta Lake

The lake is ice free. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A nice crappie bite can be found with a little bit of movement around the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair:

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The lake is ice free. **Walleye** - Fair:

### Spirit Lake

The lake is ice free. Launching boats is difficult with low water levels. The only courtesy dock in place is at Templar ramp; conditions are very shallow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with the perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with the perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Walleye** - Slow: Season is closed until May 7th. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### West Okoboji Lake

The lake is ice free. The only courtesy dock in place is at Triboji ramp. Water temperature is in the mid-30s. **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 are ice free allowing for open water fishing; courtesy docks are not in place yet. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Water levels are stable; turbidity is good. Fish eddies and current breaks. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish are starting to look for food floating their way. Try a hook loaded

with a crawler or chub. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike are on the move looking for good spawning grounds as ice melts and the water warms. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Find smallies below the dams; use a nightcrawler. **Walleye** - Fair: Try worms or minnows under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near bottom.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Catchable rainbow trout stocking season is in full swing. The 2022 Trout Stream Stocking calendar is available on our [Trout Fishing webpage](#). Clarity is good on most streams. Flows are up with recent rain. Gravel roads are messy. Use care when walking from site to site; ground conditions are highly variable from mushy to greasy. **Brook Trout** - Good: 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** - Excellent: Rain water flowing into streams is bringing a fresh supply of food for curious brownies. Try spinner or crankbaits near or around structure. Midge hatches have been good lately **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Rainbows are teasing anglers with soft strikes and nudges. Use small spinner baits, hair jigs or hooks tipped with imitation eggs floating past structure.

### [Lake Hendricks](#)

Water clarity is good. No one is out fishing with the wind and whitecaps.

### [Lake Meyer](#)

Water clarity is improving, but stirred up a bit with the wind. No one is out fishing.

### [North Bear Creek](#)

Bridge replacement work is starting on the Sacquitne Bridge on 360th St. Stream access and parking lot remain open; be courteous to workers. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair.

### [Volga Lake](#)

No one is fishing with the windy conditions.

Chance of mixed precipitation through the weekend. Temperatures are fluctuating between the upper 20s and 50s. Water levels are stable on area rivers. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

Anglers are catching a few walleye, smallmouth bass and northern pike on the Cedar River. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Cast and retrieve bucktail spinnerbaits or try a live shiner or chub underneath a bobber. **Smallmouth Bass** - 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. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast a jig tipped with plastic and minnow. Keep your presentation slow and just off of the river bottom near current breaks or slack water areas.

### **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:

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

Anglers are starting to catch a few walleye on the Shell Rock 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.

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

Anglers are beginning to catch a few walleye and northern pike on the Wapsipinicon River. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Cast bucktail spinnerbaits or float a chub or shiner under a bobber. **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.

Reports of anglers catching walleye, smallmouth bass and northern pike on the interior rivers. 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 level is 8.8 feet at Lansing and is expected to gradually rise a foot over the next week. Water temperature is 41 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle tipped with piece of worm in areas away from current along the weed edges in backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to prepare for the spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Some smaller sauger are being caught on twister tail jigs in tailwater areas. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye are moving to tailwaters and side channel structure pre-spawn. Try vertical jigging and drifting a live minnow. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Perch bite has picked up this week. Try jigging minnows or use a piece of crawler.

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

Water level is 618.1 at Lynxville and is predicted to gradually rise a foot this week. Gates are open at the dam. Water temperature is 43 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle tipped with piece of worm in areas away from current along the weed edges in backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to prepare for the spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Some smaller sauger are being caught on twister tail jigs in tailwater areas. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye are moving to tailwaters and side channel structure pre-spawn. Try vertical jigging and drifting a live minnow. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Perch bite has picked up this week. Try jigging minnows or use a piece of crawler.

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

Water level fell 9.5 feet this week and is predicted to gradually rise a foot this week. Gates are all open at the dam. Water temperature is 41 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle tipped with piece of worm in areas away from current along the weed edges in backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Fair: The bite is picking up as pike start to feed to

prepare for the spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Some smaller sauger are being caught on twister tail jigs in tailwater areas. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye are moving to tailwaters and side channel structure pre-spawn. Try vertical jigging and drifting with a live minnow. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Perch bite has picked up this week. Try jigging minnows or use a piece of crawler.

Upper Mississippi River levels fell last week; a gradual rise is predicted this week. Water temperature is creeping back up into the 40s; fish are active. 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. Walleye/sauger combined daily limit 6/possession 12.

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

Water levels are 9.9 feet at the Lock and Dam and 12.0 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is fair. Water levels are receding. **Northern Pike** - Good: Some pike are being taken on large chub rigs floated on bobbers. Pike are spawning. **Sauger** - Slow: Walleye and sauger angling has started out slow in Pool 12; most anglers are using jig and minnow rigs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Spring can be a good season to hit some tailwater yellow perch. Minnow heads and worms are the preferred bait.

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

The water level at the Bellevue Lock is receding at near 11.0 feet. The water temperature is around 42 degrees. Boat ramps are open; some debris is floating due to higher water. The gates are closed, but may open soon if the river rises. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Pike are spawning in the backwaters. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Paddlefish season is underway; review all [paddlefish rules](#) before angling in Iowa and Illinois waters. The season closes next week. 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 again with rainbow trout for the winter. You can only keep two trout per child. **Sauger** - Slow: Fishing pressure has been heavy with the warm weather. The bite has been slow, but some nice fish were reported. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Ice out catches of yellow perch can often found in the tailwaters. The bite has been good at times; most anglers are using worms for bait.

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

The water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is rising at 10.4 feet, 13.2 feet at Camanche, and 7.7 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 43 degrees in the main channel. Water clarity is fair. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Pike are spawning. **Paddlefish** - Slow: 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. The season ends next week. **Sauger** - Slow: Boat ramps are open; angling has been slow. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Lots of small perch are in the system; the future for yellow perch fishing looks

bright in Pool 14. Often the tailwaters can be a great early spot for perch when the ice recedes.

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

The water level is 11.4 feet at Rock Island and is receding. The water temperature is near 43 degrees. Water clarity is fair. **Bluegill** - No Report: Not a lot of backwater bluegill habitat exists on Pool 15 outside of marina areas.

Cold windy conditions persist on the Mississippi River; some fishing is progressing. Water levels are receding, but may start to rise again soon. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

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## SOUTHEAST

### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

The ribbon cutting for the new redesigned boat ramp will be held April 8.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Water temperature is 44 degrees. Weather is keeping most boats away.

### [Lake Darling](#)

Water remains fairly clear despite the wind. Water temperature is dropping, but holding on to the mid to low 40s. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: A few boats were out last week in the nicer weather; picked up nice bass on soft plastics worked slowly along the north shore.

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

Docks went in last Friday; gates are open at the ramp by the dam. Windy weather this week has kept angler numbers low. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Picking up a few early season bass working soft plastics very slowly along the rocks on the north shore.

### [Skunk River \(Rose Hill to Coppock\)](#)

The Skunk River has gone down some from last week, but is muddy from the rains.

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

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### [Hawthorn Lake](#)

**Bluegill** - No Report: Try small jigs along the shoreline as the water warms.

### [Lake Miami](#)

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

### [Lake Sugema](#)

**Black Crappie** - No Report: Try small jigs and minnows around the flooded trees as the water warms.

### [Lake Wapello](#)

**Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Try rubber worms or other plastics fished around the

cedar tree piles.

### [Ottumwa Park South Pond \(Trout Pond\)](#)

Trout were stocked in March. Try small tube and twister jigs, casting spoons or live minnows fished under a bobber. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 905.96 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. Docks have been installed at Island View, South Fork, and Bridgeview. Army Corps campgrounds are closed. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: 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.

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](#)

**Walleye** - Slow: Catch walleye in early April shallow in the evenings just before and after sunset; cast jigs with twister tails or swimbaits.

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

**Walleye** - Fair: Use twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows on jigs.

### [Des Moines River \(Stratford to Saylorville Lake\)](#)

**Walleye** - Fair: Try twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows on jigs. Best bite is early morning and evening.

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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### [Greenfield Lake](#)

Greenfield Lake is a good destination for early spring catfish. The lake has a good largemouth bass population. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Look for channel catfish in the upper end of the lake or wind-blown shoreline using shad sides.

### [Lake Anita](#)

The crappie bite picks up in the upper ends of the lake as water temperatures warm. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

### [Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose will provide good spring fishing. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: A few anglers are finding largemouth bass close to shore and around the jetties.

### Viking Lake

Viking lake is 4.5 feet low; access is compromised. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Search the brush piles to find active crappies. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Viking has a good catfish population. Use shad sides on a wind-blown shoreline. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

Very few reports this week due to weather. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### Lake Icaria

Docks are in at all boat ramps. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait along wind-blown shorelines to catch channel catfish of all sizes.

### Little River Watershed Lake

The dock is in at main ramp. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a jig tipped with live bait fished near deep cedar tree brush piles to catch crappie up to 11-inches.

### Three Mile Lake

Courtesy docks are in place at main ramp. **Walleye** - Fair: Using jigs or crankbaits along the dam or rockpiles to catch walleye of all sizes.

### Twelve Mile Creek Lake

The dock is in at the main ramp. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Catch largemouth bass up to 20-inches with finesse plastics fished near deep cedar tree brush piles.

Mount Ayr district lakes are 100 percent ice free. Water temperature is in the upper 40s to low 50s. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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