



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 16](#)

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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Town Bay is opening up; other areas are starting to open up. Any remaining ice is unsafe. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are picking up walleye in Town Bay with crankbaits and minnows.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is partially open. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

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

Unsafe ice. The lake remains mostly ice covered with a few open areas.

Many lakes in western Iowa are partially covered with unsafe ice. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Unsafe ice. Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. The daily limit is 3 with no more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Unsafe ice.

Rice Lake

Unsafe ice.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Unsafe ice.

Ice conditions are not safe on area lakes. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is around 17+ inches in most areas. **The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** - Good: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow or tube jig and bobber. **Bluegill** - Good: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-ups are working well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Minnows are working well; some sorting may be needed.

Five Island Lake

Use caution; the lake aerator has been started up in Town Bay. **Yellow Bass** – Good.

Ingham Lake

Ice thickness is 17+ inches. Use caution; there is an open hole in the lake with the aerator in use. **Walleye** - Fair:

Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 18 inches in most places. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Walleye** – Good.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 18+ inches. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Bluegill** - Good.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is around 17+ inches. Use caution; the lake aerator is in use. This creates an open hole on the east side of the lake. **Walleye** - Good: Best bite is at dusk.

Spirit Lake

The lake is entirely iced over with 16+ inches in most places. The best ice is on the south end and Anglers Bay. Most accesses are clear of heaves and snow. **The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** -Good. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

West Okoboji Lake

West Okoboji is relatively free of any major heaves or hazards. The bluegill bite in Little Emerson Bay and out from Triboji has been slower; fish have been finicky. **The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

Most lakes have 16 inches of ice, but shorelines and accesses have thinner ice due to runoff. Getting around the lakes has been easier after recent rain cut down on the majority of the snow cover. **The walleye season on the Iowa Great Lakes is closed until May 6th. Permanent and non-permanent ice shacks must be removed from the ice when not occupied.** For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

A little ice remains in a few backwaters; impoundments are open. River conditions are relatively steady with good clarity. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a minnow fished in a backwater or near current breaks. **Channel Catfish** - Excellent: Try a dead chub or worm fished near bottom near current breaks. **Walleye** - Good: Use a minnow or worm below the dams or eddies. Try using a 3-way with just enough weight to keep the weight on the bottom or use a worm harness for nightcrawlers.

Decorah District Streams

Area streams are looking good. Very little snow left in the woods. Spring community trout stockings start March 23. Check the [DNR trout fishing webpage](#) for stockings locations and dates. [Catchable trout stocking season](#) is just around the corner. Make sure you have a fishing license and trout fee, map, calendar, and favorite gear ready. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Insect hatches are taking place on sunny afternoons. Use midge, minnow or scud patterns for fish looking to get more bang for their effort. **Brown Trout** - Good: Meltwater flowing into streams is bringing a fresh supply of foods for curious brownies. Try fishing near or around structure. Spinner or crankbaits work well. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Rainbows 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 fishing not recommended as ice pulls away from shore.

Lake Meyer

Ice fishing is not recommended as shoreline opens. Water clarity is fair.

Upper Iowa River (below Decorah)

Fish activity is picking up below the dams. Relatively steady conditions with good clarity. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a hook tipped with a minnow fished in an eddy or off a current break.

Volga Lake

Ice fishing not recommended; very little ice along the shoreline.

A front passes through Thursday into Friday bringing rain with possibility of snow overnight. Temperatures range from the low 30s to teens. **Unsafe ice conditions on area waterbodies.** Parking lots and gravel roads are sloppy; use care when parking on roadsides. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 7.6 feet at Lansing and is rising this week. Water clarity has been good with open water fishing picking up. Water temperature is near 35 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on the feed before the spawn. Try fishing shoreline grasses in the backwaters. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye are moving up to the dams before the spawn. Bottom

bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a jig tipped with with a minnow or a bit of crawler fished in the tailwaters and side channels.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is to 614.7 feet at Lynxville and is expected to reach 616.4 feet this week. Boat ramps are open. Water clarity is good; multiple species are starting to bite. Water temperature is near 35 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on the feed before the spawn. Try fishing shoreline grasses in the backwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** – Good: Walleye are moving up to the dams before the spawn. Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a jig tipped with with a minnow or a bit of crawler fished in the tailwaters and side channels.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level at Guttenberg is 6.7 feet and is predicted to reach 9 feet this week. Boat ramps are open. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 35 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike are going on the feed before the spawn. Try fishing shoreline grasses in the backwaters. **Sauger** - Good: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** – Good: Walleye are moving up to the dams before the spawn. Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a jig tipped with with a minnow or a bit of crawler fished in the tailwaters and side channels.

Upper Mississippi River levels are predicted to rise several feet next week. Water temperature is in the mid-30s. Expect multiple species bite to pick up with warmer temperatures. 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.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is rising to 6.4 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.8 feet at the RR bridge. Water temperature is around 36 degrees; the water is clear. Ice is out in most backwater locations including O'Leary's Lake. The marinas around Dubuque still have a lot of ice within them. **Bluegill** - No Report: As usual, this year's ice fishing catch is all over the board, but in general the catch of bluegills this winter was good. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Early spring northern pike action usually kicks off in places like O'Leary's Lake. Try floating large shiners on bobber rigs. **Sauger** - Good: Hawthorne and Schmitt ramps are both open. Tailwater anglers are mostly using jigs and minnows. We received many good reports in the past few weeks. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Lots of smaller yellow perch are in the system; this is a good indicator for yellow perch fishing this upcoming year. Tailwater anglers are catching a few perch.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is rising to 7.1 feet at Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue. Water clarity is decent. Water temperature is around 36 degrees. The City of Bellevue boat ramp and the Iowa DNR ramp are open with only small ice chunks seen recently when boating. **Bluegill** - No Report: We received many good reports on bluegills this ice fishing season, but many small fish were reported. **Paddlefish** - Good: Paddlefish season opened March 1st and runs through April 15th. Check the paddlefish regulations (page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#)) before you go out snagging. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The Bellevue kids trout pond is open and vegetation free. It is a nice safe place to fish with kids on warmer winter days. If you plan on

keeping fish please only keep two fish per child. This pond will be covered in vegetation in a month or so; now is the time to fish it. **Sauger** - Good: Conditions have been good this spring. Most anglers are using jigs and minnow rigs or three-way-weights with a crankbait. **Walleye** - Good: Small walleye and an occasional keeper are being reported. Better fish are taken on a three-way crankbait rig. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Smaller yellow perch are in the system; this is a good indicator for yellow perch fishing this upcoming year.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 6.5 feet at Fulton, 10.5 feet at Camanche, and 5.6 feet at LeClaire. The river is rising. Water clarity is slightly stained from recent rains. Water temperature is near 36 degrees. **Bluegill** - No Report: Many good reports in general on all panfish species in Pool 14. Hope this translates into a good open water season. **Paddlefish** - Good: Paddlefish season opened March 1st and runs through April 15th. Check the paddlefish regulations (page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#)) before you go out snagging. **Sauger** - Good: Small walleye and small sauger are being reported with an occasional keeper reported. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is rising to 8.4 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is stained. Water temperature is 36 degrees.

Get your fishing in now; the river is expected to rise significantly in the next month. The start of the rise may be occurring now. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.00 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been falling this past week. Tailwater stage is forecast to rise over the weekend with rain in the forecast. Flood stage is 15 feet. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.09 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been fairly steady this past week. River stage is forecast to rise over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The boat ramps at Muscatine are open. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.65 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been falling this past week. Flood stage is 15 feet. The gates are starting to be put back in at the Lock and Dam. The gates may come back out with rain in the forecast and rising river levels predicted over the weekend. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 5.53 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been falling this past week. Tailwater stage is forecast to rise over the weekend. Flood stage is 10 feet. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports or ramp condition reports for this pool this week. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

Tailwater stages have been steady to falling this past week. River stage is forecast to rise over the weekend with rain in the forecast. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. Main channel water clarity is fair. Water temperature is 38 degrees. Water conditions may change with rain in the forecast. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Big Hollow has been ice-free for several weeks. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: When we get a warm day, go down towards the dam and fish a chunk of cut bait along the rock.

Discovery Park Pond

The spring trout stocking will be at about 9:30 a.m. on March 23. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: 1000 rainbow trout will be released into the North Pond. Start fishing with something flashy to get their attention; switch to bait and bobber as the trout calm down and slow down.

Jefferson Co. Park New Pond

The spring trout stocking will be at around 10 a.m. on March 23. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: 1000 rainbow trout will be stocked. Trout will circle the pond fairly quickly when they are first stocked as they get use to their new home. Use something flashy or bright that will catch their attention; switch to slower lures and baits as they calm down.

Lake Belva Deer

The lake remains ice-free. Water clarity remains fairly good, but not crystal clear. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try fishing cut bait just below the the inlet where the marsh dumps into the lake for catfish looking for winterkilled frogs and fish coming out of the marsh.

Lake Darling

More than a little water is going out the outlet with the wet weather last week. Water clarity is improving, but remains a little chalky colored. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Angler activity has been minimal with the continued rainy and colder weather.

Lost Grove Lake

The lake remains ice-free. The windy rainy/snowy weather has kept angler numbers down. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: If we get a nice warm day with the wind blowing into the rocky shoreline, try a piece of cut bait floated under a bobber near shore.

Wilson Lake

The spring trout stocking will be at around noon. on March 23. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: 1000 rainbow trout

will be released. Try fishing areas like the corners of the lake and the cedar trees in the lake; these places slow the trout down a little bit as they circle the lake looking for a place to settle down.

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

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake is almost ice-free.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

Anglers are catfishing the upper end; no reports available.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The boat dock and kayak launch are available. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish are being caught on jigs tipped with waxies in 4-6 feet of water off the jetties.

[Green Castle Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Hannen Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. The boat dock and the restroom are open.

[Lake Macbride](#)

There is a dock in at the main ramp and permanent slips available at the main ramp and Opie Ave ramp.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake is drained for the ongoing renovation project.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The docks were put in this week.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

There is still some ice on the north end of the lake.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

Dam removal has started at Central City. Public access below the dam is not permitted during the project.

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

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

The ice is gone. Try cut bait for channel catfish.

[Lake Miami](#)

The ice is gone. Try cut bait for ice-out channel catfish.

[Lake Sugema](#)

The ice is gone. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try cut bait on windblown shorelines.

[Lake Wapello](#)

The ice is gone. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try cut bait along the shorelines.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.52 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. The ice is gone. Courtesy docks have been installed at the Dedication Point boat ramp and at Bridgeview. The Corps campgrounds are still closed. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Ice-out catfish are usually caught on the windblown shorelines using dead shad or chubs. **Walleye** - No Report: There is a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye at Lake Rathbun. This was effective January 1st. All walleyes measuring less than 15-inches must be immediately released unharmed.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

The lake is open water. Visitors are asked to avoid the campground area due to the continued storm damage cleanup.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Big Creek Lake](#)

The dock at the Williams Drive Boat Ramp is in. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catch channel catfish as the ice recedes in the next few weeks using dead gizzard shad. Dead shad are also flowing over the spillway which could trigger a fair catfish bite in the pool below.

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

Channel Catfish - Good: Catch channel catfish out of the main current or in the mouths of feeder creeks using dead shad. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleye through March and early April below Saylorville Dam, the dams in Des Moines, and deeper pools on jigs tipped with twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows.

Lakes in central Iowa are ice-free. For information on central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Greenfield Lake](#)

Catfishing can be very good right after ice-out. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try fishing cut bait on the windblown shoreline.

[Lake Anita](#)

Black Crappie - No Report: When the weather stabilizes, try running jigs under a bobber in the pontoon arm of the lake to catch 9-inch crappies

[Meadow Lake](#)

No Report

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

No Report

[Viking Lake](#)

Channel Catfish - No Report: Look for ice-out catfish in the upper end of coves and on windblown shorelines.

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

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Docks are in at the beach and dam boat ramps.

[Little River Watershed Lake](#)

The dock is in at the main boat ramp.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Docks are in at main ramp.

[Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

The dock is in at main boat ramp. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Catch largemouth bass of all sizes with finesse plastics fished along rocky shoreline areas.

[West Lake \(Osceola\)](#)

Docks are in at main boat ramp.

Mt. Ayr district lakes are ice-free. Water temperature in most lakes is in the upper 30s. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

