



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 30](#)

March Fishing Podcast

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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Courtesy docks are in. Anglers are picking up fish in Town Bay, along shore near Ice House Point, and in the fish house. The inlet bridge area has also been productive. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up crappie along Ice House Point shoreline and from the fish house using small jigs. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are picking up walleye in Town Bay using crankbaits minnows and twisters. The bite has been good at times. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use minnows and jigs near Ice House Point and from the inlet bridge area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Reports will be available as we receive them.

[North Twin Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Water levels remain low; use caution when loading boats at the ramps.

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

The lake is ice-free. Reports will be available as we receive them. Expect shore fishing opportunities as water temperatures warm up over the week. All walleye between 19 and 25-inches must be immediately released unharmed at Storm Lake; and no more than one walleye longer than 25-inches can be taken per day.

Western Iowa lakes are ice-free. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

The lake is about 30 percent ice-free. 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 - Fair: It's time to target catfish; use cut bait from the wind-swept shore. **Walleye** - Slow: Anglers are having some success fishing from the jetties and wader fishing along the east shore after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Rice Lake

Unsafe ice conditions.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Unsafe ice conditions.

Winnebago River

Water levels are dropping to 6.10 feet. **Northern Pike** - Slow. **Walleye** - Slow.

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.

Ingham Lake

A large hole is open on the lake, but there is still 15+ inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair:

Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 16 inches in most places. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Walleye** - Good.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is around 17 inches. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Bluegill** - Good.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is around 17+ inches, but conditions around the shorelines are thinner. **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 larger lakes have 16 inches of ice or more, but shorelines and accesses have thinner ice due to runoff. Colder weather maintained ice levels. Vehicle use is more limited in certain areas. **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 \(above Nashua\)](#)

River conditions are relatively steady with good clarity. A lot of chop on the water. Fish activity slowed with this front coming through. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a minnow fished in a backwater or near current breaks. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try a dead chub or worm fished near bottom near current breaks. **Walleye** - Slow: 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 are now occurring. Check the [DNR trout fishing webpage](#) for stockings locations and dates. [Catchable trout stocking season](#) starts April 3. Make sure you have a [fishing license and trout fee](#), trout map, stocking calendar, and your 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 conditions are very poor. Ice fishing is not recommended. The south end of the lake is open.

[Lake Meyer](#)

No ice left on the lake. Water clarity is good. Bite is slow.

[Upper Iowa River \(below Decorah\)](#)

Relatively steady conditions with good clarity. **Walleye** - Slow: Use a hook tipped with a minnow fished in an eddy or off a current break.

[Volga Lake](#)

Fish activity is slow. Choppy conditions due to winds. Water clarity is declining with resuspension of sediment.

A front passes Friday into Saturday bringing a possibility of mixed precipitation with high winds overnight. Temperatures range from mid-60s to 20s. Majority of the ice is gone from area waterbodies. Parking lots and gravel roads are sloppy; use caution when parking on roadsides. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Manchester District Streams

Anglers have had success catching brown trout on Spring Branch Creek. There has been some good insect hatches occurring with the recent warmer temperatures. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Try matching insect hatches using a flyrod or casting small flashy spinners with a spincast rod.

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

Walleye - No Report: Cast jigs and ringworm plastics tipped with a minnow.

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

Walleye - No Report: Cast jigs and ringworm plastics tipped with a minnow.

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

Walleye - No Report: Cast jigs and ringworm plastics tipped with a minnow.

Interior rivers continue to drop and remain clear. Reports of anglers catching walleye on the interior rivers. Trout streams are in excellent condition. The forecast for the upcoming weekend calls for potential strong storms. Contact your local bait shop for the most recent angling opportunities. For more information, contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 8.5 feet at Lansing and is expected to reach 9 feet this week. Water clarity has been good with open water fishing picking up. Water temperature is near 42 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Northern pike are spawning. Expect the bite to pick up post-spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye fishing in the Lock and Dam tailwaters has been good in recent weeks. 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 616.9 feet at Lynxville and is expected to reach 618.5 feet this week. Boat ramps are open. Water clarity is good; multiple species are starting to bite. Water temperature is near 44 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Northern pike are spawning. Expect the bite to pick up post-spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye fishing in the Lock and Dam tailwaters has been good in recent weeks. Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a jig tipped with a minnow or a bit of crawler fished in the tailwaters and side channels.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is near 8.5 feet at Guttenberg and is predicted to rise to 11 feet over the next week. Boat ramps are open. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 42 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Northern pike are spawning. Expect the bite to pick up post-spawn. **Sauger** - Good: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye fishing in the Lock and Dam tailwaters has been good in recent weeks. Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** -

Good: Try a jig tipped with a minnow or a bit of crawler fished in the tailwaters and side channels.

Upper Mississippi River levels are on the rise. Water temperatures are in the 40s. Expect the bite for multiple species 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 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 8.0 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 10.2 feet at the RR bridge. Water temperature is around 43 degrees; the water is clear. **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. Pike spawn in early spring and the spawning season is approaching. **Sauger** - Good: Still receiving some nice reports on catching walleye and sauger. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow rig. **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 8.9 feet at Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 44 degrees. The City of Bellevue boat ramp and the Iowa DNR ramp are open. At the DNR ramp, water may get up on the parking lot later this week making it difficult to launch. **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. Fishing has been temperamental this week with some poor days sprinkled in with good catches. **Walleye** - Good: Small walleye and an occasional keeper are being reported. Better fish are taken on a three-way crankbait rig. Walleye will spawn over the next coming weeks. **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 8.2 feet at Fulton, 11.5 feet at Camanche, and 6.5 feet at LeClaire. The river is rising. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 44 degrees. **Bluegill** - No Report: Many good reports in general on all panfish species in Pool 14 over the winter season. 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. **Shorthead redhorse** - No Report: Redhorse will soon start to bite and will run up rivers like the Wapsipinicon. They can provide good early season fishing action. **Walleye** - No Report: Walleye spawning season will start soon; expect them to spawn over the next few weeks.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is 9.3 feet and rising at Rock Island. Water clarity is stained. Water temperature is 44 degrees.

The River is slowly waking up; northern pike, yellow perch and walleyes are soon to spawn. Get your River fishing done as the Mississippi is expected to rise significantly in the next month. These cold days is probably delaying the inevitable rise. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.31 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. River stage is forecast to rise over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.23 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to keep rising over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught by GPC.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.77 feet at Lock and Dam 17 and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to rise over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. The gates are out of the water 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: Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.42 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and has been fairly steady the past few days. Flood stage is 10 feet. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool this week. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages have been slowly rising the past few days. River stages are forecast to rise over the weekend. Main channel water clarity has been fair. Water temperature is around 43 degrees. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. River 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

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

Reports of anglers catching walleye and northern pike on the Cedar River in Bremer and Black

Hawk counties. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Northern pike have been aggressive with the spawn; try a jig and minnow or spinnerbait. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast jigs and ringworm plastics tipped with a minnow.

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level is 683.6 feet. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait on the upper end towards 380/965. **White Crappie** - Fair: Use bright jigs or minnows in brush piles.

[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.

[Hannen Lake](#)

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

[Lake Macbride](#)

The docks are in. Water temperature has been in the low 40s. Any sized motor may be used at 5 mph. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow. **Walleye** - Slow. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow.

[Liberty Centre Pond](#)

2,000 rainbow trout were stocked last week. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try small jigs, spinners, scented baits or live bait.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake is drained for the ongoing renovation project.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The docks are in. Water temperatures have been in the low 40s. **Walleye** - Slow.

[Prairie Park Fishery](#)

2,000 rainbow trout were stocked last week. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try small jigs, spinners, scented baits or live bait.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[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. **Walleye** - Fair.

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

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Try cut bait for channel catfish.

[Lake Miami](#)

Try cut bait for ice-out channel catfish.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Channel Catfish - No Report: Try cut bait on windblown shorelines.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Channel Catfish - No Report: Try cut bait along the shorelines.

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

Trout were stocked last week. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try spinners or trout bait. Adjust the retrieval speed of your lure until you find what the trout are interested in.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.68 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. The ice is gone. Courtesy docks have been installed at the Dedication Point boat ramp, Honey Creek State Park and 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](#)

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

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: A family fishing event and trout stocking will be held at noon on Saturday, April 1. Catch trout using small in line spinners, spoons 1/8 ounce or smaller, twister tail jigs 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](#)

All docks are in at the Big Creek boat ramps. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleyes in the evenings, during and after sunset, near rocky shorelines. Cast and slowly retrieve jigs tipped with twister tails, swimbaits or live bait.

[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.

[Triumph Park West](#)

Rainbow Trout - Excellent: A family fishing event and trout stocking will be held at noon on Saturday April 1. Some tagged fish will be stocked for prizes provided by the City of Waukee. Catch trout using small in line spinners, spoons 1/8 ounce or smaller, twister tail jigs or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

Lake Anita

Overall, the fish population looks good at Anita for 2023. Black crappie will start to move up into the pontoon arm of the lake as water temperatures warm.

Lake Manawa

Lake Manawa is a good lake to catch channel catfish early in the spring. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try shad sides or cut bait on windy shorelines. Catch catfish of all sizes.

Prairie Rose Lake

Prairie Rose will offer excellent fishing in 2023. The largemouth bass, bluegill and black crappie populations look very good.

Viking Lake

The Viking Lake water level is close to full and will offer good fishing opportunities in 2023. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try cut bait on windblown shorelines.

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. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try cut bait fished along windblown shorelines to catch all sizes of channel catfish.

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.

West Lake (Osceola)

Docks are in at main boat ramp.

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

