



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

**DON'T  
BREAK  
THE ICE**

NO ICE IS  
**100% SAFE**

**AVOID OFF  
COLORED  
SNOW OR ICE**

ICE SHOULD BE AT LEAST...  
**4 INCHES**   
**THICK FOR FISHING**  
& **5 INCHES**   
**THICK FOR  
SNOWMOBILES**

## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Feb. 1](#)

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

## **NORTHWEST**

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches near the Ice House Point boat ramp. Ice conditions continue to deteriorate rapidly with the warm weather; use caution. There is open water in Town Bay from the winter aeration system. The area around the fish house in Town bay is kept ice-free with a water agitator to provide open water fishing opportunities. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use waxworms or crawlers on a jig. **Walleye** - Fair: Try minnows or crawlers on jigging spoons. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use waxworms or small minnows.

### [Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness is 3 to 6 inches. Conditions are deteriorating; many areas are unsafe.

## Blue Lake

Aerators are in operation off-shore near the park visitor center for the winter season; expect open water and thin ice in this area.

## Brushy Creek Lake

Warm weather and runoff have weakened ice; many areas are unsafe. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** **Bluegill** – Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Fair.

## Moorland Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked on Jan. 25. Ice conditions are deteriorating quickly with the warm weather. Use extreme caution if venturing out. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

## Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Ice thickness is 8 to 12 inches. Ice conditions are variable and continue to deteriorate with the warm weather. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often.

Ice thickness in the district ranges from unsafe conditions to up to 12 inches in other areas. Ice conditions are highly variable and are starting to deteriorate fast. Be cautious of rapidly changing conditions with the warm weather. Many areas along shorelines will soften first. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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## Blue Pit

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Rainbow trout were stocked on Jan. 26. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

## Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 10 inches. Ice conditions will change daily. Wear safety gear and check ice thickness as you go. 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. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait near the edge of the rushes. Use caution near the rushes: ice conditions will deteriorate quickly in these areas. **Walleye** - Slow: Best bite is after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a

small jig tipped with a waxworm. You may have to switch to bigger tackle to avoid the small fish.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 9 to 12 inches. The winter aeration system is operating. **Black Crappie** - Slow: **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait. **Walleye** - Slow.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 9 to 13 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait near the edge of vegetation. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 9 to 12 inches. The winter aeration system is operating. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with bait in near vegetation. Best bite is early morning. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

With warmer weather forecast for the next ten days, be cautious of changing ice conditions. Access points will deteriorate fast. Foot traffic only recommended. 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 fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 7 to 1s inches in most areas. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting will most likely be needed.

### Ingham Lake

The lake is completely ice covered. Ice thickness is 9 to 11 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 9 to 11 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Good.

## Scharnberg Pond

You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

## Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The lake is fully ice covered. Ice thickness averages 11 inches. **Walleye** - Fair.

## Spirit Lake

The lake is fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 9 to 12 inches in most areas. Ice can be highly variable. Be aware of large heaves. **Black Crappie** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. Many nice-sized fish have been seen lately. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Good: Minnows work well. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Find good numbers; may need to sort for size.

## West Okoboji Lake

The lake is fully iced up. Ice conditions are highly variable with 5 to 11 inches. Foot traffic and small ATV use should be possible in most areas. Use caution. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good. **Pumpkinseed** - Good. **Walleye** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting may be needed.

Area ice conditions are highly variable. All areas are completely ice covered. Ice thickness is 7 to 11 inches in most areas. Ice conditions will start to deteriorate as consistent above freezing temperatures are expected to continue for at least a week. Use extra caution along shorelines and accesses that will deteriorate fastest. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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# NORTHEAST

## Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers can possibly catch a few walleye on the Cedar as it should open back up from the hard freeze. **Walleye** - Slow: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Interior rivers should open back up with the warm weather. The extended forecast for next week looks to be warming temperatures. Ice reports are sketchy and will deteriorate with the warmer weather; use extreme caution when venturing out. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. For further information contact your local bait shops for the most recent information. Contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

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## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.47 feet at Lansing and is expected to rise slightly. Ice thickness is near 7-8 inches. The top level of ice is eroding with rain. Lansing Village Creek ramp has iced in. Ice fishing on Shore Slough has been productive with lots of sorting bluegills. Avoid ice in areas of current. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is near 614.9 feet at Lynxville and is slightly rising. Water temperature is 34 degrees at Lock & Dam 9-Lynxville. Backwaters have formed 7+ inches of ice. **Unsafe ice conditions in areas with current.** Enter Bussey Lake from the upper end causeway. **Unsafe ice conditions near the parking lot and ramp.** Crossing Johnson Slough at Sny Magill has become dangerous. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

### Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is 6.5 feet at Lock & Dam 10 tailwaters-Guttenberg. Guttenberg boat ramp is still iced in; it may open up in the near future. Even if ramps open up, there may be a lot of ice flows to deal with. Ice anglers are walking to Zollicoffers at Mud Lake to pick up bluegills. Ice thickness is near 7+ inches. Avoid the thin ice near the creek outflow at Mud Lake. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice

jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Upper Mississippi River levels are expected to rise slightly. Expect lots of run-off with snow-melt. Use caution on shoreline edges and avoid darker ice. Ice will deteriorate quickly with projected warm weather. Most boat ramps are iced in. Some ramps may open soon, but there will be a lot of low ice to contend with. Backwaters have around 7-8 inches of ice; the top few inches are very slushy. Any areas with current are not yet recommended for ice fishing.

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

The river is rising at Dubuque to near 6.2 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.8 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Ice fishing is being reported, especially in the various marinas. Ice quality is deteriorating fast. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being reported with bluegills in marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Small bluegills are being reported out of the harbor areas on teardrop type lures and waxworms. Lots of small fish being caught with a lot of sorting going on. Ice quality is deteriorating fast. **Sauger** - No Report: Dubuque ramps are iced in. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Nice 12-inch plus perch were being reported all fall from backwater areas and shallower water in the tailwaters.

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

The water level is rising to near 6.9 feet at Bellevue. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Some ice fishing is taking place; ice quality is rapidly deteriorating. The city ramp at Bellevue is open but subject to ice flows. The DNR ramp is open water, but large chunks of ice are lodged on the rampway. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappie are incidentally being caught with bluegills on waxworms. **Bluegill** - Good: Lots of small fish being caught. Often anglers are catching 10 small fish to one keeper. Most anglers are using tear drop type lures with waxworms. Ice quality is deteriorating fast. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The kids trout pond north of the DNR fisheries station is stocked with trout and can provide fun action for kids throughout the winter. If you plan to keep trout, limit yourself to 2 trout per child so we can keep good fishing in the pond

throughout the winter. **Walleye** - Slow: Early reports at Bellevue is that walleye and sauger are slow. The ramp at Bellevue is open, but subject to ice flows. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: A healthy perch population exists in Pool 13; we expect to hear reports soon. Many anglers target perch using tip-downs with a minnow.

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

The water level is rising to near 5.7 feet at Fulton, 10.9 feet at Camanche and near 4.9 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 34 degrees. Rumors of the ramps being open in Clinton, but undoubtedly subject to ice flows. Ramps at Camanche and Princeton are confirmed open; lots of large ice chunks were floating downstream. **Bluegill** - No Report: Expecting to hear of some ice fishing at Sunfish and Rock creek, but have not had any reports so far. **Walleye** - No Report: Ramps have just opened up; ice flows are common.

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

The water level is rising to near 7.0 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 34 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Ramps are just opening up, but subject to massive ice flows.

What a difference a week can make. We still have ice fishing taking place, but ice is suspect in many places. Many of the tailwater ramps have opened up, but may be subject to large ice flows. Water levels are rising throughout the district. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

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

Tailwater stage has risen close of a foot to 6.75 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 7.7 feet by early next week. Flood stage is 15 feet. The Marquette St. boat ramp in Davenport is open; boats are able to launch. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **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.

### Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage has risen over of a foot to 5.46 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 6.4 feet by early next week. Flood stage is 15 feet. The ramp at Muscatine is open and there were some boat trailers in the parking lot. The dock is in the water. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers be the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. We have not received any reports on how the bite has been. **Walleye** - No Report: 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 5.78 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to reach 7.4 feet by next week. Flood stage is 15 feet. The main channel and toolsboro ramp is open. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. We have not received any reports on how the bite has been. **Walleye** - No Report: 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 3.74 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to reach 4.8 feet by next week. Flood stage is 10 feet. **Unsafe ice conditions.** We have not received any fishing or ice condition reports for this pool.

The main channel has opened up with the recent rains and warm weather.

Tailwater stages are on the rise with recent rains and snowmelt. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger, but we have received no reports on how the bite has been. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.



### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Open water along the shore anywhere the sunshine is hitting. About 2 inches of slush/ice on the main lake.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Ice is turning to a dark color and there are rings of open water around the trees.

### [Lake Darling](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Most of the ice is turning to a dark blue/green color. Areas of open water on the north side and around the jetties.

### [Lake Geode](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** About an inch and a half of slush/ice out on the lake with mostly open water along the shoreline.

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

Ice is deteriorating fast with continued warm weather. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### **Skunk River (Coppock to Mississippi River)**

The Skunk River is opening up quickly with the snow melt and warm weather. It is wide open downriver of Mount Pleasant.

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

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### [Central Park Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 to 10 inches; shorelines may be weak. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Largemouth Bass** – Good.

### [Grundy County Lake](#)

**Black Crappie** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

### [Hannen Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches with the top 2 inches reported as bad.

### **Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)**

Ice fishing is not recommended.

### **Kent Park Lake**

Ice fishing is not recommended.

### **Lake Macbride**

Ice fishing is not recommended. There may be protected areas with decent ice, but much of it has deteriorated.

### **Otter Creek Lake**

The lake is still empty due to the renovation project; the project is complete and the lake will fill as mother nature allows.

### **Pleasant Creek Lake**

Ice fishing is not recommended. There may be protected areas with decent ice, but much of it has deteriorated.

### **Union Grove Lake**

Ice thickness is 6 to 9 inches on most of the lake; shorelines may be weak. The aeration system was turned on Jan. 26 which will open up the south end of the lake.

### **Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)**

A dredging project in the Pinicon Ridge backwaters will affect ice fishing this winter.

Ice is deteriorating to poor on many lakes; not recommended for travel. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### **Hawthorn Lake**

Use caution and check ice thickness often. Watch for open water areas along the shoreline.

### **Lake Miami**

Very little fishing activity. Use caution and check ice thickness often if going out.

### **Lake Sugema**

Ice is melting along the shoreline and thinning in other places. Ice fishing is not

recommended.

### Lake Wapello

Use caution and check ice conditions often. Shoreline ice is melting and creating open water areas.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

Use caution and check ice conditions often. Open water areas will start to develop along the shoreline. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 902.63 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Check ice thickness often. Anglers have been fishing in South Fork, Buck Creek and out from Honey Creek State Park. Shoreline ice is melting creating open water areas. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody.

### Red Haw Lake

Use caution and check ice conditions often. Watch for open water areas along the shoreline.

The lakes in south central Iowa have quite a bit of slush and water on top of the ice. Use caution if heading out on the ice. Ice thicknesses vary; check ice thickness often. With this warmer weather and runoff, look for the ice along the shoreline to start to get soft. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

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## SOUTHWEST

### Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake

Ice thickness is 10 inches off the boat ramp, but less as you go out. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Additional trout have been stocked and will be available in good numbers as ice recedes from the shoreline, or if better ice conditions

return. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: If ice recedes from the shoreline, use ice fishing panfish tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. Trout tend to swim close to shore in depths out to 10 feet. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 inches. Ice conditions are deteriorating quickly. Ice fishing may not be possible by the weekend of February 3. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappies over brush piles and roadbeds in the mornings and evenings with glow jigs or glow spoons baited with waxworms or minnows.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

Ice conditions have deteriorated. Anglers were still on the ice as of Jan. 31, but some of the shoreline ice is very weak. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: If ice recedes from the shoreline, use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Terra Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** An additional stocking of trout will occur as ice recedes. The [DNR Trout Fishing website](#) will be updated when the trout are stocked. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: If ice recedes from the edge, use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Triumph Park West](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended due to poor ice conditions.** Additional trout were stocked in both the east and west ponds that can be caught when the ice recedes from the shoreline or if better ice conditions return. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: If ice recedes from the edge, use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Deteriorating ice conditions in most ponds and lakes in Central Iowa with 4 to 10 inches of ice remaining. **Ice fishing is not recommended for the weekend of February 3.** 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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### [Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Use extreme caution; ice will deteriorate quickly with the unseasonably warm temperatures. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use similar tackle used for crappies like small spinners, spoons, twister tails and minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Greenfield Lake](#)

Greenfield has a good population of 10-inch black crappie. **Black Crappie** - Good: Best bite is late evening.

### [Lake Anita](#)

Ice thickness is 6 to 9 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: One angler reported catching crappies just before dark close to the fish cleaning station. **Bluegill** - Fair: Most of the fishing is taking place below the campground in the north arm of the lake.

### [Littlefield Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 9-inch black crappie are being picked up around the tree piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find a cedar tree pile on the [Fishing Atlas](#) and set up. Sorting for 8-inch fish is needed.

### [Orient Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches with several inches of slush on top. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Orient has good numbers of 9- to 10-inch fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills are 8- to 9-inches and in good body condition.

### [Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches. **Black Crappie** - No Report: There are fewer 10- to 12-inch black crappies this winter. **Bluegill** - Slow: Find cedar tree piles for best success. Fish will average 8.5-inches.

### [Willow Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 inches. Fishing has been good. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Early morning and late afternoon are best to find black crappies. **Bluegill** - Good: Find a tree or brush pile close to the creek channel to catch 8-inch bluegill. **Redear Sunfish** - No Report: Willow has a good population of large redear sunfish.

Ice conditions are starting to deteriorate. With forecasted rain this weekend, use caution when venturing out. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### [Green Valley Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 to 9 inches off the main boat ramp near the beach area. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8- inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles. **Walleye** - Slow: A few walleye are being caught with jigs tipped with live bait fished near deep cedar tree brush piles.

### [Little River Watershed Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches off the Paul Vaughn boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 10-inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm or minnows fished near deep cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Catch bluegill up to 8.5-inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles.

### [Three Mile Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches off the main boat ramp. Fishing has been slow. Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool.

### [Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches off the main boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with waxworm or minnows fished in the flooded timber to catch crappie of all sizes. **Bluegill** - Slow: Catch bluegill up to 8.5-inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished in the flooded timber. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Catch yellow perch up to 12 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished in the flooded timber.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 2 to 9 inches. Ice conditions are deteriorating due to rain last week and unseasonably warm weather. Shoreline areas are starting to open at some lakes. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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## Looking for a summer job in natural resources?

The DNR is hiring [seasonal park aides](#) to work in Iowa state parks and forests this summer. If you have a passion for the outdoors, are looking for an active job and enjoy helping people, consider spending your summer in one of Iowa's most beautiful natural spaces. Learn more on the [DNR's employment web page](#) or contact a [specific state park office](#) to inquire about summer jobs at that location. Come join our team!

**Application deadline is March 31, 2024, or when positions are filled.**