



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



MIDWEST WALLEYE CHALLENGE
MARCH 30 - JUNE 30

ENTER TODAY!



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Feb. 29](#)

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

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

The lake is completely open.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is completely open. Courtesy docks are in at Ice House Point boat ramp and the state campground boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up crappie from the fish house in Town Bay and in the marina. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find bluegill in the marina and near the inlet bridge. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fish are being picked up in the marina and near the inlet bridge. Try along Ice House Point, the marina and near the inlet bridge. Sorting is needed.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is open.

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

The lake is ice-free. The marina was partially covered in skim ice, but will likely be completely open by the weekend.

Swan Lake

The lake is ice-free. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Pick up crappie from the fish house with tube jigs. Most fish are 8- to 8.5-inches.

Area lakes are almost completely ice-free. A few have some new skim ice that formed in the bays that will likely be gone by the weekend. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

The lake is almost ice-free. Water level is 13.44 inches below crest. 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. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: It's a good time to target catfish. Try a dead chub or cut bait from the wind-swept shore. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig in the rushes.

Crystal Lake

Black Crappie – Slow.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Yellow Perch – Slow.

Winnebago River

Water level is 4.2 feet. **Northern Pike** - Slow. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig head tipped with a minnow along current breaks.

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

The lake is essentially ice-free. **The walleye season is closed until May 4. Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting will most likely be needed.

Ingham Lake

The lake is open in many areas. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

Lost Island Lake

The lake is ice-free. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair.

Minnewashta Lake

The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie - Fair. **Bluegill** -

Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Good.

Scharnberg Pond

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

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

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

Spirit Lake

Unsafe ice conditions. The walleye season is closed until May 4th. Black Crappie - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. Many nice-sized fish have been seen lately. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Find good numbers; may need to sort for size.

West Okoboji Lake

Unsafe ice conditions. The walleye season is closed until May 4th. Black Crappie - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good. **Pumpkinseed** - Good. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting may be needed.

Many smaller and shallower lakes are now open. Unsafe ice conditions on the lakes that still have ice. Continued warm weather should open up most covered lakes in the coming week. **The walleye season is closed on the Iowa Great Lakes until May 4th.** For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers are catching walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike and crappie. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try jigging colored tube jigs along rock shorelines mid to late afternoon. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow. **Smallmouth Bass** - Excellent: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

We have not received any fishing information this week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

We have not received any fishing information this week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

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

We have not received any fishing information this week. Walleye - No Report: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Anglers are doing well on the interior rivers fishing from boats; navigation has been difficult with low water conditions. 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.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 7.9 feet at Lansing and is expected to stabilize over the next week. Early ice out has given anglers a jump on spring fishing. Water temperature is climbing to near 40 degrees. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish anglers are catching a few channel cats on crawlers. **Sauger** - Fair: Try hair jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters or off tips of deeper wing-dams. **Walleye** - Fair: Use hair jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters or off tips of deeper wing-dams. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are near spawn; the bite is picking up.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is near 613.2 feet at Lynxville and is expected to gradually fall over the next week. Water temperature is 40 degrees at the Lock & Dam at Lynxville. The boat ramp is open there. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish anglers are catching a few channel cats on crawlers. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice-sized sauger are being caught on jig and minnow; bite can be slow at times. **Walleye** - Fair: Slow bite at times; nice fish being found on live bait. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Perch are near spawn; the bite is picking up.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is near 5.1 feet at Lynxville and is expected to gradually fall over the next week. Water temperature is near 40 degrees. The boat ramps in Guttenberg are open. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish anglers are catching a few channel cats on crawlers. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice-sized sauger are being caught on jig and minnow; bite can be slow at times. **Walleye** - Fair: Slow bite at times; nice fish being found on live bait. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Perch are near the spawn. Expect the bite to pick up as the water temperature reaches into the 40s.

Upper Mississippi River levels are predicted to gradually fall. The main channel has opened up; many anglers are taking advantage of the early open water fishing. Live bait and a slow presentation are key to enticing the early bite. Expect the bite

to pick up as water temperatures rise. Main channel temperatures are climbing to near 40 degrees.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The river is steady at Dubuque at near 5.3 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.9 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 40 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Spawning may be occurring shortly, weeks before the normal spawning season. **Sauger** - Fair: Most anglers are using a jig and minnow or one eye rig. Fishing has been good at times this spring for many anglers with many small fish and an occasional keeper being caught.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is steady at near 5.1 feet at Bellevue. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 40 degrees. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Some catfish are being caught. Seems early, but anglers who target them can have good catches. **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** - Fair: Most anglers are catching small saugers with an occasional keeper mixed in using a jig and minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is steady at near 4.9 feet at Fulton, 9.4 feet at Camanche and 4.4 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 41 degrees. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Some catfish are being caught. Seems early, but anglers who target them can have good catches. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are catching small saugers with an occasional keeper mixed in using a jig and minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is steady at near 5.2 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 41 degrees.

Walleyes and sauger fishing have been concentrated in the tailwaters. Paddlefish season starts March 1st; check page 11 of the [Iowa Fishing Regulations](#) for snagging regulations. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 5.73 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been

fairly steady. **Sauger** - Slow: Some boats are fishing below Lock and Dam 15 and in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.52 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been fairly steady. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow. **White Crappie** - Fair: Reports of some crappies being caught in Big Timber. Look for crappies around brush piles; use minnows under a bobber or jigs and minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.46 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been fairly steady. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers is being reported as hit-or-miss. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 2.03 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been fairly steady. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows; mostly small sauger being caught. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages have been fairly steady this past week. Main channel water temperature is around 38-40 degrees. Water clarity is good. Tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger is being reported as hit-or-miss. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

The lake is open water; little activity out on the lake the last few days.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Winds the last few days have kept most anglers off the lake.

[Lake Darling](#)

Water temperature is going up and down with the weather. A little skim ice around the edges of the lake.

[Lake Geode](#)

The lake is open water. A few boats were out earlier in the week, but mostly just to get out on the water.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

A little skim ice in the more shaded bays and areas on the south side of the lake.

[Skunk River \(Coppock to Mississippi River\)](#)

Open water; running about 1/2 bank full.

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

[Cedar River \(Cedar Rapids to Moscow\)](#)

Sauger - Fair: Try jigs or live bait in deeper holes. **Shovelnose sturgeon** - Fair: Use crawlers in holes along deeper sandbars. **Walleye** - Fair: Try jigs or live bait in deeper holes.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

the lake level is 384 feet. No docks are in at this time. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try bright jigs or minnows over deeper brush or rock ledges. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: A few fish are being caught on cut bait in the upper end of the lake and some wind-blown flats.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Hannen Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

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

The lake is ice-free.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake is ice-free. Most docks are not in; a dock is in at the main ramp and slips available at the main and opie ramps. Water temperatures are near 40 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows over brush/stumps in 10-15 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try fishing stumps or rock piles in 8-12 feet of water. **Walleye** - Slow. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair.

[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](#)

The lake is ice-free. Boat docks are not in yet, but a permanent loading slip is available at the main ramp.

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

The river and ramps are open. A dredging project is in progress in the Pinicon Ridge backwaters. **Walleye** - Fair.

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

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Try cut bait for channel catfish in areas with the wind blowing in.

[Lake Miami](#)

Target channel catfish on the wind-blown shorelines using cut bait.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Try cut bait for channel catfish along the wind-blown shorelines.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Use cut bait to catch catfish on the wind-blown shorelines.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 902.87 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. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait on the wind-blown shorelines.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Channel catfish will move into wind-blown shorelines; use cut bait in those areas.

Area lakes are completely open water. 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 - Good: Use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics, spoons, spinners and blade baits. 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

As of Feb. 22, Big Creek Lake was partially open on the upper half of the lake. Open water is accessible from the 100th Street Boat Ramp. The Marina Boat Ramp is very close to being ice-free. **Walleye** - Slow: Catch walleyes as the water warms into the first week in March; cast jigs with plastics or live minnows near rocky shorelines and jetties in the evenings.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: Good river conditions have created an early season opportunity. Cast jigs with twister tails, swim baits or live minnows below the dams and in the deeper pools with slow water.

Des Moines River (Stratford to Saylorville Lake)

Walleye - Fair: Early ice out combined with good river conditions have created an early season opportunity. Cast jigs with twister tails, swim baits or live minnows in the deeper pools with slow water.

Lake Petocka

Additional trout were stocked on Feb. 23. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics, spoons, spinners and blade baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Terra Lake

Additional trout were stocked on Feb. 23. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics, spoons, spinners and blade baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Triumph Park West

Additional trout were stocked on Feb. 23. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics, spoons, spinners and blade baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Ponds and lakes in Central Iowa are open water. Some new skim ice may last for a short time on small lakes and ponds. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Cold Springs District Farm Ponds

Water temperatures in farm ponds warm sooner than larger lakes. Ponds are an excellent fishing destination after ice out. Remember to get permission to fish

private farm ponds. **Black Crappie** - Good: Target crappie on a wind-blown shoreline on warm days. **Bluegill** - Slow: A small piece of crawler under a bobber works well for bluegills in ponds. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Early spring is a good time to target channel catfish in ponds. Try shad sides or cut bait for best success this time of year. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Some of Iowa's best bass fishing occurs in farm ponds.

Lake Anita

Black Crappie - No Report: Black crappie will move into the upper end of the pontoon arm on warm sunny days. Cast a small jig under a bobber. **Bluegill** - No Report: In early spring boat anglers should target bluegills around deep tree piles and along the roadbed in the lake. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Anglers report catching largemouth bass with a slow presentation around deep structure.

Orient Lake

Orient Lake is a good spring destination for channel catfish. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Try shad sides or cut bait on the windy side of the lake.

Prairie Rose Lake

Black Crappie - No Report: Black crappies will move close to the shore on warm sunny days. **Bluegill** - Slow: Target bluegills around their winter habitat.

Viking Lake

Black Crappie - No Report: Black crappie will move shallow in the campground area of the lake this time of year. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: An angler reported catching 2 pound channel catfish using shad sides. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Viking Lake has a good largemouth bass population. Some of the best fishing of the year can be early spring.

Fishing was good early this week with the warm temperatures. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Lake Icaria

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 the main boat ramp.

Three Mile Lake

Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

The dock is in at the main boat ramp.

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

Boat ramps remain closed due to low water conditions.

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



Looking to learn new skills or dust off the rust? Join us at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca and enjoy all that spring has to offer! This weekend event, held in partnership with Johnson County Conservation Board is geared to give you skills to spend more time outdoors this year.

Learn how to fish, fly fish and tie flies, kayak, backpack, camp, Dutch oven cook or forage. Our BOW instructors are there to help you along the way.

Find details in the [2024 Spring BOW Catalog](#).