

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



MIDWEST WALLEYE CHALLENGE
APRIL 1-JUNE 29

ENTER TODAY!

The late night, annual [walleye collection](#) has started at Rathbun Reservoir, Storm Lake, East Okoboji and Spirit Lake. DNR fisheries crews set gillnets at night in traditional areas looking for walleyes that are ready to spawn.

The Rathbun and Spirit Lake fish hatcheries are open and ready for visitors. Contact the individual hatchery you intend to visit for visitor hours.



- [NORTHWEST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Water levels are several inches over the crest of the spillway. Anglers are doing well from shore. Look for walleye and crappie fishing to get even better as the water starts to warm up over the next week. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Anglers have picked up a few from the fish house. Shore fishing will improve once water temperatures start to climb. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are picking up fish. Cast jigs along the east shore. Town Bay, Ice House Point shoreline and the

inlet bridge area have been productive. Use a jig or a slip bobber with minnows **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Brushy Creek Lake

The courtesy dock is in on the west and south ramp.

North Twin Lake

Water clarity is about 2 feet. Water levels are about 12 inches below crest. Courtesy docks are in at the South and SE ramps.

Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Water temperatures have warmed to around 50 degrees. Anglers are catching crappie, walleye, and yellow bass in the marina. Expect shore fishing to improve as water temperatures warm up. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Anglers have picked up a few fish in the marina. **Walleye** - Fair: Look for fish to be close to shore during walleye spawning activity. Cast jigs and twisters or use a minnow on a slip bobber near shore. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Anglers are catching bass in the marina. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Water temperatures is 44 degrees. The courtesy dock are in at most of the boat ramp. **Walleye** - Good: Anglers wading and boat fishing are catching walleye. Try jigs, minnows, or slow retrieved crankbaits near reefs and shallow rocky shorelines. **Yellow Bass** – Fair: Fish will move shallow on the north shore on warm afternoons. Use small jigs and plastics.

Crystal Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Crappie are suspended in the dredge cuts. Slowly retrieve jigs or slip bobbers with minnows.

Lake Cornelia

Black Crappie - Good: Use small jigs and minnows below a bobber. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Anglers are catching perch on warm days with small jigs and minnows.

Rice Lake

Courtesy docks are in at both boat ramps. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: A few perch can be caught near cattail edges on the warmer days.

Winnebago River

Northern Pike - Fair: Use suckers, chubs, and jigs in slack current areas and where tributaries enter the river.

For additional information, contact Clear Lake Fisheries Office at 641-357-3517.

NORTHEAST

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

Anglers are catching walleye and smallmouth bass. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Try a jig head with plastics with or without a live minnow or cast and retrieve crankbaits or spinnerbaits. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a jig head with plastics with or without a live minnow. Look for the deeper pools current breaks and tail ends of riffles.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams are in excellent condition. [Trout stream stocking](#) has started. Next week's forecast calls for temperatures near the 60s; should be good aquatic insect hatches to provide great trout fishing.

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

Anglers are catching walleye. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a jig head with plastics with or without a live minnow. Look for the deeper pools current breaks and tail ends of riffles.

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

Anglers are catching walleye. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a jig head with plastics with or without a live minnow. Look for the deeper pools current breaks and tail ends of riffles.

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

Anglers are catching walleye. Northern pike bite should pick up in backwater areas and main channel areas post-spawn. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try a live chub or shiner underneath a bobber or cast and retrieve spoon or spinnerbaits in backwater areas or the main channel. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use a jig head with plastics with our without a live minnow or cast and retrieve crankbait or spinnerbaits. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig head with plastics with or without a live minnow. Look for the deeper pools current breaks and tail ends of riffles.

Interior river levels are falling along with some slight turbidity. Anglers are catching walleye and smallmouth bass. The weather pattern for next week looks to be more stable in temperatures, hopefully providing improved fishing. No information on area lakes. For more information, contact Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level has dropped to 8.8 feet at Lansing and is expected to gradually fall over the next week. Water temperature is near 47 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Pike are on the feed after the spawn. Try larger flashy spinnerbaits in the shallows and weedy shorelines. **Sauger** - Fair: Reports of lots of smaller fish with some nicer ones mixed in. Use a hair jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use spinners along the rocks on shorelines with current. **Walleye**- Good: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters. Some fish are being picked up downriver on closing dams. Expect the bite to pick up post-spawn. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a crappie rig tipped with worms or a minnow in the current seams off shore.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is near 18.9 feet at Lynxville and is expected to fall to 17 feet next week. Fishing away from the current below the Lock and Dam or side channels has been good. Water temperature is 47 degrees. **Sny Magill landing is closed due to high water.** **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Pike are on the feed after the spawn. Try larger flashy spinnerbaits in the shallows and weedy shorelines. **Sauger** - Fair: Reports of lots of smaller fish with some nicer ones mixed in. Use a hair jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use spinners along the rocks on shorelines with current. **Walleye** - Good: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs and minnows in the tailwaters. Some fish are being picked up downriver on closing dams. Expect the bite to pick up post-spawn. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a crappie rig tipped with worms or a minnow in the current seams off shore.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level has risen to 10.9 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to gradually fall to 9.0 feet over the next week. Water temperature is near 46 degrees. **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Pike are on the feed after the spawn. Try larger flashy spinnerbaits in the shallows and weedy shorelines. **Sauger** - Fair: Reports of lots of smaller fish with some nicer ones mixed in. Use a hair jig tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use spinners along the rocks on shorelines with current. **Walleye** - Good: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs and minnows in the tailwaters. Some fish are being picked up downriver on closing dams. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use a crappie rig tipped with worms or a minnow in the current seams off shore..

Upper Mississippi River water levels are on a gradual fall this week. During high water, find areas away from the current to fish. The bite is improving as fish become more active with warmer water temperatures. Water temperature is quickly climbing back into the mid 40-50s this week.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level at Dubuque Lock and Dam is receding at 10.2 feet and 12.3 feet at the RR Bridge. The water is stained. Water temperature is around 48 degrees in the main channel. **Black Crappie** - Fair: It takes a bit of fishing in brush piles, but anglers can catch a few crappie on minnow rigs. **Bluegill** - No report: Bluegill populations are strong; no reports of anglers fishing for them since ice out. Some backwaters still have remnant ice in them. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Pike fishing this winter and early spring was very good. It has slowed; should pick up again after water warms a bit. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleye bite is slow during their spawning seasons. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching yellow perch in the tailwater areas on jig and worm rigs.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is slowly receding to near 11.4 feet at Bellevue. Water is stained. Water temperature is around 49 degrees in the main channel. **Bluegill** - No report: Anglers caught lots of bluegills during the ice fishing season; expect a good open water fishing season. **Brown Bullhead** - Good: The lower pool access sites are good places to fish off the bank to catch brown bullhead and an occasional catfish. Bullheads are good early season biters. **Northern Pike** - No report: Pike spawning season should be nearly over. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Paddlefish season remains open until April 15. [Please review the rules for paddlefish](#)

snagging. Rainbow Trout - Excellent: The Kids' trout pond north of the DNR fisheries station is stocked with trout and should remain good fishing until April/May when it will weed over. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are using a jig and minnow rig. Some small walleye are being reported along with a few fish approaching 10 pounds. Walleye spawning is underway. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Anglers are catching perch in the tailwaters with small jigs and worm rigs.

Mississippi River Pool 14

Water level is receding to near 10.7 feet at Fulton, 13.3 feet at Camanche, and 7.8 feet at LeClaire. Water is stained. Water temperature is around 50 degrees. **Bluegill** - No report: It was a good ice fishing season this year; hopefully that translates to a good open water season. **Channel Catfish** -Good: Seems early, but good channel catfishing is occurring using blood baits. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Pike should be done spawning; bite should pick up in upcoming weeks. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Paddlefish season on the Mississippi River is March 1 through April 15. Snagging is only allowed within 500 yards of navigation dams and their spillways. [Please review the rules for paddlefish snagging](#). **Walleye** - Fair: Hit-or-miss bite.

Mississippi River Pool 15

Water level is receding to near 11.4 feet at Rock Island. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 51 degrees.

Water is holding around 50 degrees throughout the district. Levels are receding slowly. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage has crested at 11.07 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. Tailwater stage is forecast to fall by the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **White Crappie** - No report: Look for crappies in the backwaters around brush piles as water temperatures start to warm. Try minnows under a bobber or jigs and minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 9.79 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to start falling over the weekend. Flood stage is 15 feet. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **Walleye** - No Report: Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits below the Lock and Dam. **White Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies in the backwaters around brush piles as water temperatures start to warm. Try minnows under a bobber or jigs and minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 10.99 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to start falling early next week. Flood stage is 15 feet. The gates are out of the water at the dam. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **Walleye** - No Report: Try vertical jigging with minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits below the Lock and Dam. **White Crappie** - No

Report: Look for crappies in the backwaters around brush piles as water temperatures start to warm. Try minnows under a bobber or jigs and minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 7.29 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to start falling over the weekend. Flood stage is 10 feet. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or crankbaits. **White Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies in the backwaters around brush piles as water temperatures start to warm. Try minnows under a bobber or jigs and minnows.

River stage has crested and is forecast to start falling over the weekend or early next week. Tailwater stage has risen around 5 feet. Main channel water temperature is around 49 degrees. Water clarity is fair to poor. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Water temperatures is about 50 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies have moved out to a little deeper water; try along the inner edge of the flooded timber if they aren't there. Move down towards the dam and work the northsides flooded timber in shallower. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Catfish are getting plenty fat feeding on last fall's bluegill fingerlings. Work along the face of the dam off the ends of the jetties on the north side. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Work the north side of the lake around the jetty and kayak launch area and down around the lower island on that side on a warm afternoon. Bass should come in to feed on the little bluegills.

Discovery Park Pond

There are still trout to catch after being stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: They are starting to "wise-up" to anglers. A little more finesse is required - use small bobbers, small minnows and red worms or small jigs.

Emma Young Pond

There are still trout to catch after being stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** -Good: Small jigs and bobber and live bait works best. The trout left in the pond are not easily fooled.

Lake Belva Deer

Water temperature is 48-50 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Work the edges of the trees out from the beach and down towards the dam. Drift live minnows. The weather conditions haven't been favorable for crappie to stay in shallower water. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Bass are still holding out in deeper water. Not much action closer to shore. Anglers are catching a few suspended in the trees along the old creek channel.

Lake Darling

Water temperature is 50 degrees. The docks are in at the boat ramps. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Hit-or-miss bite with current weather conditions. Look for them around the rock piles in 4-6 feet of water or around the rock piles by the dam. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: The colder weather hasn't improved the bite. Slowly work soft plastics along the deep water drop-offs. Try a soft plastic crawdad or salamander along the base of the rip-rap around the point.

Lake Geode

Water temperature is 50 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers continue to catch crappies, although at a slower pace. Start looking for them around the ends of the tree falls and the fish habitat in 3-4 feet of water then move out to tops of the habitat in 8 to 10 feet of water. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try drift trolling a piece of cut bait along the face of the dam.

Lost Grove Lake

The wind and weather are keeping angler numbers down. Water temperature is between 48 and 49 degrees. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try cut bait below a bobber along the windward side of the shoreline, especially in areas where the waves are stirring up the bottom of the lake. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Bass continue to hang around edge of the deeper water. Slow retrieves and finesse are the keys to catching them.

Vista Park Pond

There are still trout to catch after being stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: A lot of anglers have caught their limit of trout. Trout still in the pond are more cautious and timid; a little more finesse is need. Try live bait and small bobbers or small 1/64 ounce jigs that don't spook them.

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

Hawthorn Lake

Channel Catfish -Slow: Try shad guts or dead minnows on wind-blown shorelines. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: Largemouth bass should start moving into shallow water as temperatures warm. Use plastics fished pretty slow.

Lake Keomah

Lake Keomah is drained for a lake restoration project. **Please stay out of the lakebed.**

Lake Miami

Channel Catfish - Slow: Try dead minnows on wind-blown shorelines. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: Look for bass to start to move into shallow water along the rocks at the dam.

Lake Sugema

Bluegill - No report: Bluegill should start to move shallow as the water temperature increases. Use small jigs. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try shad guts or dead chubs on wind-blown shorelines.

Lake Wapello

Channel Catfish No report: Try dead minnows on wind-blown shorelines.

Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

There are still trout to catch after being stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and

pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Try in-line spinners, chunks of nightcrawlers or prepared trout baits.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.93 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Water temperatures are in the upper 40s. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody. **Black Crappies** - No Report: Water temperatures are still too cool for crappies to move shallow. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Use shad guts or dead chubs on wind-blown shorelines. **Walleye** - No Report: Walleye broodstock collections have been completed for the season.

Red Haw Lake

Bluegill - No report: Bluegills should start to move shallow with warmer water temperatures. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Try dead minnows on the shorelines.

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

SOUTHWEST

Big Creek Lake

Walleye - Fair: Day bite has been slow. Catch walleye shallow near rip-rap shoreline and jetties around sunset and after. Cast jigs with twister tails, swim baits or minnows.

Boone District Farm Ponds

Community ponds are the quickest to warm up after ice out, creating a fair to good pre-spawn largemouth bass and crappie bite. Check the [Fish Local page](#) to find ponds with public access. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Slowly retrieve small twister tails or swim baits. If it exists in the pond, target edges of cattail stands and any wood habitat. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Slowly retrieve plastics and shallow diving crankbaits.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: Cast jigs with twister tails, swimbaits or live minnows below the Saylorville Spillway and Des Moines dams .

For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Greenfield Lake

Greenfield Lake is a good early season catfish destination. **Channel Catfish** - Fair Use shad sides or cut bait along wind-blown shorelines. Greenfield has a good channel catfish population. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: Greenfield has a good largemouth bass population.

Lake Anita

Lake Anita will provide good fishing this spring with good bass, bluegill and crappie populations. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Black crappies will move into the pontoon area as the water

temperature warms. There is a big year class of 9-inch fish. **Bluegill** - Slow: Anglers should be able to catch bluegills around deep structure. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

Littlefield Lake

Black Crappie - No Report: Littlefield has a good population of 9-inch black crappie.

Mormon Trail Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Bite will pick up along the dam on warm sunny days. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Mormon Trail has a good largemouth bass population with a good percent of fish over 15-inches.

Prairie Rose Lake

Prairie Rose will again be a good fishing destination this season. The lake has an excellent largemouth bass population, large bluegills and black crappies. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Anglers are catching largemouth bass around the jetties.

Viking Lake

Water clarity is good. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Bite in the pontoon arm should pick up soon on warm sunny days. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use shad sides or cut bait on the windy shoreline. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Anglers are having good luck casting the shoreline.

For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

The dock is in at the main boat ramp. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Catch largemouth bass up to 19-inches with finesse plastics along wind-blown rocky shorelines.

Little River Watershed Lake

The dock is in at main boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs fished in shallow coves to catch all sizes of crappie.

Three Mile Lake

****Driving is prohibited on any service roads used to access the lakebed and the lakebed itself.**** Lake level is 11 feet below normal pool. Boat ramp lanes are out of the water at the main boat ramp.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

The dock is in at the main boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappies of all sizes with jigs in shallow coves.

Water temperature is in the low to mid-50s in most district lakes. Some anglers are catching crappies in ponds and small lakes; not much activity on larger lakes yet. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-931-6031.

Iowa boat registrations expire April 30

Current boat registrations expire April 30. Boat registrations are good for three years. Registration fees support boater education and safety, water trails, navigation enforcement and aquatic invasive species.

Boat owners may bring their current registration to any Iowa county recorder's office when they renew. Learn more about how to register your boat on the [DNR Boating website](#).

[Get tips for how to get your boat ready for spring.](#)