

Wetland Habitat Conditions – Fall 2018

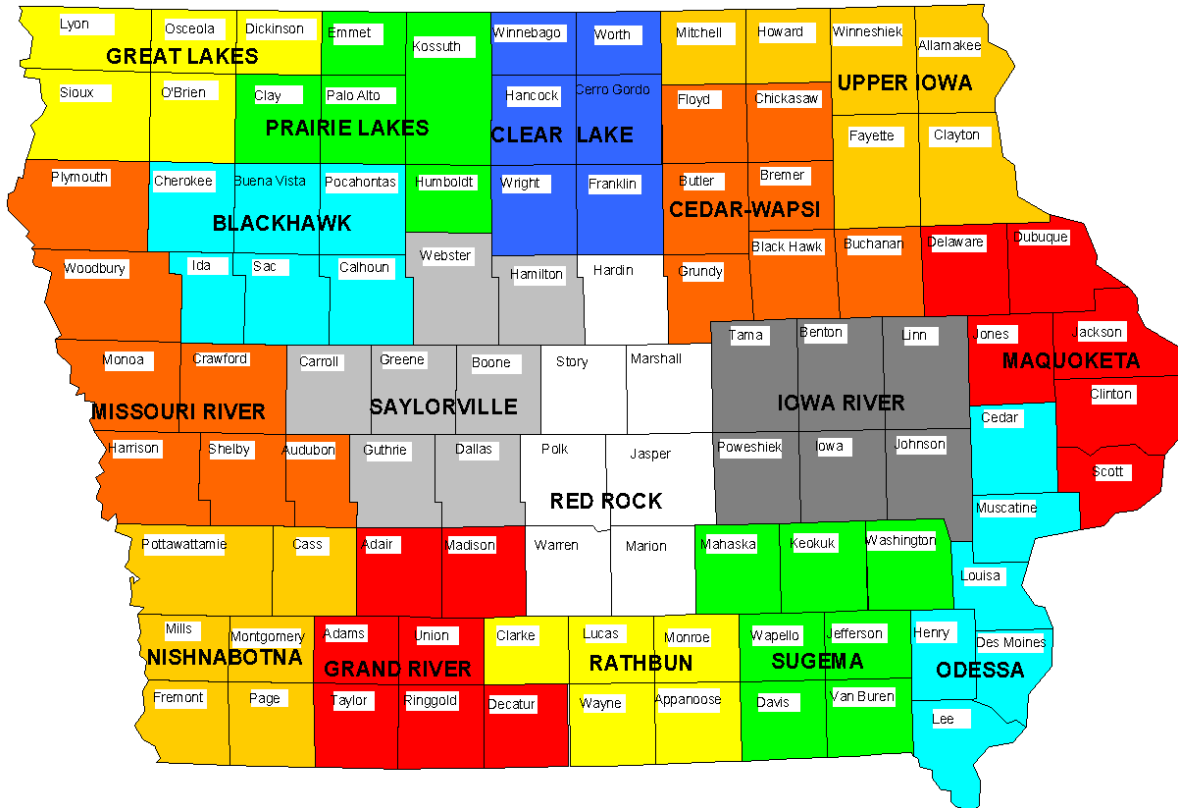
(Some Wildlife Units Updated November 2, 2018)

DNR WILDLIFE UNITS

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Definitions Of Terms Commonly Used In Descriptions Of Areas -

- Crest water level refers to the established optimum or target water level for the lake or wetland or the maximum water level legally allowed on the lake or wetland.
- Emergent vegetation refers to plants like cattails, bulrushes, burreed, etc., that are rooted on the bottom of the marsh but project above the surface of the water.
- Submergent vegetation refers to plants like sago pond weed, curly leave pondweed, wild celery, coontail, etc., that grow beneath the surface of the water. The tops of these plants sometimes reach the surface in shallow water. Water clarity and fish populations largely determine the amount of submergent vegetation in wetlands. Wetlands with good water clarity and few, if any, fish usually have good submergent plant communities that attract a wide variety of ducks.
- Large boats are 16-24 foot boats with 20 hp or larger outboard motors.
- Mid-size boats are 12-15 foot boats with 15 hp or smaller outboard motors

- Small boats are generally shallow draft boats that can be paddled, rowed or poled, or propelled with a small outboard motor (<10 hp) or an electric trolling motor.
 - WMA is the acronym for Wildlife Management Area, which includes lands owned and managed by the Wildlife Bureau of the DNR.
 - WPA is the acronym for Waterfowl Production Area, which includes lands owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and, in most cases, managed by the Wildlife Bureau of the DNR.
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BLACK HAWK WILDLIFE UNIT

Clint Maddix, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 9/19/2018

BUENA VISTA COUNTY

Little Storm Lake

Water levels: Little Storm Lake is currently at crest elevation.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has developed around the shoreline and there are scattered pockets throughout the basin, little or no submergent vegetation is present.

Boat Access: The rock boat ramp across from Frank Starr Park is currently accessible.

Notes: Little Storm Lake's elevation is controlled by the main lake and should remain usable through the fall.

Storm Lake

Water levels: Storm Lake is currently at crest elevation.

Vegetation: Very little emergent vegetation present. No submergent vegetation is present.

Boat Access: Storm Lake should be accessible for all boats this fall.

Notes:

CALHOUN COUNTY

South Twin Lake

Water levels: South Twin is currently at crest.

Vegetation: Narrow bands of emergent vegetation have developed along the shoreline. Submergent vegetation is almost non-existent.

Boat Access: A rock boat ramp can be used for launching small and mid-size boats, but caution should be used on backing down the ramp.

Notes: The north side of South Twin Lake is a Wildlife Refuge and closed to all access from Sept. 1 to Jan. 31. There are two marker buoys on the lake to the north of the ramp that mark the refuge line.

CARROLL COUNTY

Artesian Lake

Water levels: Is at crest, the 30-acre wetland is fed by three artesian wells and should continue to stay filled throughout the fall.

Vegetation: This wetland was drawn down through Spring and Summer to facilitate a fish kill and revegetation. Currently the wetland is heavy with annual and perennial emergent vegetation.

Boat Access: A rock boat ramp can be used to launch small or mid-size boats.

Notes: Navigation may be difficult due to emergent vegetation, pre-scouting recommended.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Little Clear Lake

Water levels: The water level is at crest elevation.

Vegetation: There is excellent submergent vegetation throughout the lake with emergent vegetation along the shoreline.

Boat Access: There are two boat ramps that can be used to launch small to medium boats.

Notes:

Lizard Lake

Water levels: Lizard Lake is at 6" below crest elevation.

Vegetation: The lake is covered with dense vegetation in certain locations; however there are plenty of open areas in the middle.

Boat Access: There is one concrete boat ramp that is usable by boats of all sizes and two primitive boat ramps which are only usable by small boats.

Notes: The boat ramps have varying degrees of accessibility. Pre-scouting is recommended.

Shimon Marsh

Water levels: The water level is currently at crest elevation.

Vegetation: The marsh has fair stands of emergent vegetation.

Boat Access: Boat access was made on south end of marsh in 2017, will be usable for small to medium boats WITHOUT motors.

Notes: Special note should be made that current regulations do not allow for motorized vessels on this body of water.

Sunken Grove

Water levels: The water level is currently around crest elevation.

Vegetation: The marsh has fair stands of emergent vegetation and scattered pockets of submergent vegetation.

Boat Access: A concrete boat ramp on the west lobe of the marsh can be used to launch small and mid-size boats. A primitive gravel boat ramp is located in the eastern lobe of the marsh and is only usable by small boats.

Notes:

SAC COUNTY

Black Hawk Wildlife Area

Water levels: The Black Hawk Lake Inlet, State Marsh and DU Marsh are currently at crest elevation. Adjacent smaller wetlands and pits are also at or near crest.

Vegetation: Most wetlands have very dense stands of vegetation. DU Marsh has a heavy stand of emergent vegetation.

Boat Access: State Marsh has a rock boat ramp that is usable at this time for all sizes of boats. The Black Hawk Lake Inlet has a concrete boat ramp that is currently open for boats, but should pay special attention to maps places at boat ramp showing areas that boaters should stay away from because of dredge still being in operation.

Notes:

Black Hawk Lake

Water levels: Black Hawk Lake is currently at crest elevation.

Vegetation: The lake currently has pockets of submergent vegetation.

Boat Access: There are 3 concrete boat ramps that can be used by all boats of any size.

Notes:

Burrow's Pond

Water levels: Burrow's Pond is currently at crest elevation. Adjacent smaller wetlands are also at or near crest elevation.

Vegetation: Good stands of emergent and submergent vegetation present.

Boat Access: The rock boat ramp is usable for small to medium sized boats at this time with the current water levels.

Notes:

Kiowa Marsh

Water levels: All wetlands on the Kiowa Marsh complex, except Kiowa Proper and Cork wetlands, are at or near crest elevation; Kiowa Proper has 28 inches of boards removed from structure and water levels will continue to drop through the Fall to facilitate enhancement of wetland north of the paved highway. And Cork wetland has 12" of boards removed to help facilitate draw down of Kiowa Proper.

Vegetation: All wetlands have good stands of emergent vegetation along their shorelines, while Heidenreich has near 100 percent coverage of emergent vegetation with small open pockets.

Boat Access: The rock boat ramp is usable for small and mid-sized boats at Kiowa Proper and a newly added rock ramp at Heidenreich in 2017 will be usable this Fall.

Notes: Scouting during daylight hours is recommended for Heidenreich to be able to find open pockets for hunting.

Sac City Wetland Complex

Water levels: Sac City Wetland Complex main basin has water; smaller adjacent wetlands have varying amounts of water.

Vegetation: Diverse vegetation is present on the basins.

Boat Access: None - walk in only.

Notes:

Tomahawk Marsh

Water levels: All wetlands on Tomahawk Marsh are currently at or near crest elevation.

Vegetation: All wetlands have some emergent vegetation along the shorelines and some have submergent vegetation as well.

Boat Access: None

Notes: This is a walk-in area. Pre-scouting is recommended due to current vegetation conditions.

CEDAR-WAPSI WILDLIFE UNIT

Jason Auel, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10-26-18

BREMER COUNTY

Leopold Area

Water levels: At Crest

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is abundant in all wetlands.

Boat Access: No boat access at this area

Notes: The river has finally returned within its banks.

Sweet Marsh

Water levels: All pools are at crest or near where they typically are for this time of year.

Vegetation: Abundant vegetation in all pools except A.

Boat Access: Boat access is possible on main pools.

Notes: The A cell has less vegetation than normal due to high water the entire year.

BUTLER COUNTY

Big Marsh

Water levels: All pools except A are at or near crest.

Vegetation: Vegetation is abundant

Boat Access: Boat access is possible on main pools.

Notes: The river is finally back within its banks. The pools are at their usual levels for this time of year. However, due to structure failure the farthest east pool north of lower pool is dry. Actions are being taken to resolve this issue.

CLEAR LAKE WILDLIFE UNIT

TJ Herrick, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 11/02/18

CERRO GORDO COUNTY

Union Hills

Water levels: Large wetland on west side is about 6" below crest, other basins are at crest, with some of the smallest basins nearly dry.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation has developed in most wetlands.

Boat Access: There is one boat access on this area, with access being adequate for smaller boats.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged.

Ventura Marsh

Water Level: The water level is currently about 0.4 feet below crest.

Vegetation: The marsh vegetation has decreased from last year.

Boat Access: Boat accessibility will be possible this year.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Crystal Hills WPA

Water levels: Wetlands very near crest.

Vegetation: Some emergent vegetation can be found with submergent vegetation being more prevalent.

Boat Access: Boat access will be impossible except for very small boats.

Notes: This area will provide some good walk-in hunting. Pre-scouting is highly encouraged.

Gladfelter WMA

Water levels: Wetlands are at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has developed in most of the wetlands.

Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area.

Notes: This area will provide good walk-in hunting opportunities.

Eagle Lake

Water Level: The marsh is at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has developed across most of the marsh, with pockets of open water.

Boat Access: Boats should be able to access the lake..

Notes:

East Twin Lake WMA

Water Level: The marsh is at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has maintained around the perimeter of the main pool.

Boat Access: Small boats will likely be able to access the marsh this year.

Notes: West Twin Lake is a shallow open water lake with no shoreline vegetation, but it can be accessed by boat.

Meredith Marsh

Water levels: Wetlands are at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is dense in the west wetland.

Boat Access: Small boats should be able to access the main east wetland.

Notes:

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Harmon Lake

Water levels: Wetlands are at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation growth is good and nicely interspersed.

Boat Access: Boats will likely be able to access the center and east pools this year.

Notes: Some walk-in hunting opportunities are available.

Myre Slough

Water level: The marsh is about at crest.

Vegetation: The vegetation is dense.

Boat Access: Small boats will likely be able to access the marsh this year – due to the boat channel being very low..

Notes: Walk-in hunting opportunities will be available.

WORTH COUNTY

Elk Creek - Pool A

Water level: The water level is near normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Vegetation is limited.

Boat Access: Boat access is possible.

Notes:

Elk Creek - Pool B

Water level: Water level is at normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation growth is sparse with some submergent vegetation

Boat Access: Boats can access the area at the current water level.

Notes: Large boats should be able to access the area.

Elk Creek - Pool C

Water level: The water level is at normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Vegetation growth is good and interspersed nicely with open-water areas.

Boat Access: Large boats should be able to access the area.

Notes:

Rice Lake

Water Level: The main lake is at crest. Joice Slough, at the southeast end of the main lake, is 2.0 feet above crest due to a plugged road culvert on the outlet of the marsh. The parking lot at Joice Slough will be muddy and wet - use caution.

Vegetation: There is some emergent vegetation and abundant submergent vegetation in the main lake. Emergent and submergent vegetation is present in Joice Slough

Boat Access: Boat access to Rice Lake and Joice Slough is possible.

Notes:

Hanlontown Slough

Water level: The water level is near normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Vegetation growth is dense and interspersed with areas of open water.

Boat Access: Very small boat access.

Notes: If the water level reaches crest elevation, the dense vegetation will still make accessing the open water very difficult.

Silver Lake and Marsh

Water level: The lake is at crest and the marsh is near crest.

Vegetation: The marsh is densely vegetated with emergent vegetation.

Boat Access: Boat access is possible on the lake and very small boats can access the marsh.

Notes:

WRIGHT COUNTY

Big Wall Lake

Water Level: The water level is at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is abundant and nicely interspersed with pockets of open water. Submergent vegetation is abundant in open water areas.

Boat Access: Most all sizes of boats can be used to access the area.

Notes:

Elm Lake

Water levels: The water level is at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is very sparsely distributed along the shore on the south end. A couple of islands of cattails persist in the center of the lake. Submergent vegetation is sparse due to the high frough-fish population.

Boat Access: Boats can be used to access the area.

Notes:

Lower Morse Lake Wetland Complex

Water levels: Large and small wetlands have water.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is well developed in most wetlands.

Boat Access: Morse Lake is accessible by boat, but about feet below crest.

Notes: There are still good walk-in opportunities on the Lower Morse complex.

GRAND RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Chad Paup, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/9/18

ADAMS COUNTY

Lake Icaria

Water levels: Water levels are good for small boats and walk ins.

Vegetation: Decent vegetation

Boat Access: none.

Notes:

UNION COUNTY

Mitchell Marsh

Water levels: Water levels are high.

Vegetation: Vegetation is under water.

Boat Access: boat access is ok.

Notes: Still able to hunt Mitchell.

GREAT LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Chris LaRue, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 9/20/18

DICKINSON COUNTY

Christopherson Slough

Water levels: Recent rains have water levels slightly above crest level for the main marsh.

Vegetation: Vegetation is marginal in the main marsh due to flooding this year however, there is good vegetation in many of the large and small wetlands.

Boat Access: Boat access is good.

Notes: Most all large and small wetlands in the complex have good water and vegetation for excellent walk-in hunting opportunities.

Diamond Lake

Water levels: The Lake has been above crest all year due to heavy rains and flooding conditions

Vegetation: With very high water conditions all summer Diamond Lake has good emergent and some submergent vegetation. Flooding appears to have reduced submergent vegetation growth this year but water quality has remained fairly good under these bad conditions.

Boat Access: Be aware that flooding conditions has created major issues with floating cattails blocking the boat ramp frequently.. The ramp has been cleaned several times already only to be blocked again a few days later after winds shift. Hunters may need to push past some vegetation to launch with large or small crafts.

Notes: Most all of the large and small marshes have good water and vegetation conditions creating excellent walk-in hunting opportunities.

Dugout Creek

Water levels: The main marsh is being brought back up to crest elevation.

Vegetation: Water levels were dropped with the structure to help maintain and improve vegetation during this high water year with flooding conditions. Emergent and submergent vegetation habitat is good on the main pool and in all small and large wetlands.

Boat Access: Boat access is good for large and small boats.

Notes: Most all large and small wetlands have good water in this wet year creating some excellent walk-in hunting opportunities.

Garlock Slough

Water levels: Garlock is still slightly above crest elevation with the recent rains and high water levels this year on West Lake Okoboji.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation looks good but flooding conditions and rough fish back in the slough have reduced submergent growth.

Boat Access: The slough is accessible by small boats, but does not have a boat access. Kayaks, or canoes would work best along with walk-in hunting.

Notes: Garlock is in fair condition however, the high water and re-entry of carp from flooding may degrade the system. The Iowa DNR and conservation partners may work in the future to improve aquatic vegetation for water quality and to keep they system rough fish free. The expanded Garlock Slough Complex has a lot of great wetlands for excellent walk-in hunting opportunities too.

Grovers Lake

Water levels: The lake has been above crest or above all season.

Vegetation: Even with flooding conditions in 2018 emergent vegetation looks good but submergent vegetation appears to have been reduced.

Boat Access: High water from flooding appears to have shifted some cattails. The boat channel may be difficult to navigate for small and large boats.

Notes:

Hales Slough

Water levels: The water level is at crest elevation with Spirit Lake.

Vegetation: Vegetation appears to be good condition in the main slough.

Boat Access: The are is accessible by small boats

Notes: Hunters should note that with the wet year many of the small and large wetlands in the complex have good water and vegetation for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Horseshoe Lake WMA

Water levels: The water level is at normal crest elevation

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation appears good but high water and flooding conditions have slightly reduced submergent vegetation.

Boat Access: Access is good for both large and small boats

Notes: Horseshoe Lake WMA is outside the Jemmerson Slough Waterfowl Refuge and therefore IS open to public hunting. The area provides good walk-in hunting opportunities.

Jemmerson Slough

Water levels: All wetlands and bays are at or above crest elevations due to recent heavy rains.

Vegetation: Vegetation and habitat conditions are good within the complex attracting waterfowl.

Boat Access: **The pools within boat access are inside the designated WATERFOWL REFUGE, AND THEREFORE ARE CLOSED TO HUNTING.**

Notes: **The Jemmerson Slough Wetlands Complex is about 1,100 acres in size. About 665 acres is included in the Waterfowl Refuge that was established in 2009. The refuge is closed to all public access when the duck season is open. There are some wetlands outside the refuge that can provide good walk-in hunting opportunities this year with the high water levels.**

Kattleson-Hogsback Complex

Water levels: West Hottes lake is at crest elevation or slightly above with Spirit Lake.

Marble Lake Marble Lake is also at crest elevation due to high water this year.

Vegetation: Even with high water conditions vegetation and waterfowl habitat in both Marble and West Hottes is good. The High water may of reduced some submergent vegetation growth which is common when you have flooding and high water.

Boat Access: Boat access is good for large and small water boats with outboard motors.

Notes: With the excessive rainfall this year most all large and small wetlands in the complex have excellent water and flooded vegetation that will provide very good walk-in hunting opportunities.

Looking forward if weather and water conditions allow, it is intended that West Hottes may be pumped partially down next year to improved aquatic vegetation and waterfowl habitat..

Little Swan Lake

Water levels: Little Swan is below crest level as boards were removed this summer to begin dewatering again.

Vegetation: Vegetation is in poor condition due to the high water and flooding conditions. Flooding most of this Spring and Summer have prevented really any vegetation growth.

Boat Access: Boat access is good for small boats and outboard motors. However, know the water level is low and may make it difficult for navigation. The west bay may not be accessible by boat.

Notes: Hhgh water and flooding the last two seasons have allowed rough fish such as carp to re-enter the system. It is our goal to dewater to kill these fish this winter and to try and improve vegetation once again next year. The very large watershed with the flooding conditions has proved to be challenging to establish aquatic vegetation that will improve water quality and waterfowl habitat. Some projects take longer than others when mother nature doesn't cooperate.

Sidel Marsh

Water levels: The marsh is at crest elevation.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are good.

Boat Access: No boat access is available.

Notes: The area provides good walk-in hunting opportunities and has good habitat conditions.

Spring Run

Water levels: Water levels in most all of the complex are at or above crest elevations.

Vegetation: Vegetation conditions are good in most areas despite the flooding conditions this year. Pre-scouting is suggested to find those key large and small wetlands with good vegetation attracting waterfowl.

Boat Access: Spring Lake is accessible by large and small boats
Lily Lake is accessible by large and small boats but vegetation may make it difficult in areas.
Prairie and Pleasant Lake are accessible by large and small boats with outboard motors.

Notes: Most all large and small wetlands have good water creating excellent walk-in hunting opportunities. Hunters should note that the high water conditions has most small and dry wetlands this year near crest elevations. Birds may be more scattered due to this but these areas have newly flooded vegetation that is excellent for local and migrating waterfowl this year.

Welch Lake Complex

Water levels: The Welch Lake Complex has very good water levels at this time.

Vegetation: Vegetation is good in many of the wetlands but the smaller wetlands with newly flooded vegetation may be more attractive than some larger wetlands.

Boat Access: Welch Lake can be accessed by large or small boats.

Notes: Most all wetlands have good water and vegetation creating excellent walk-in hunting opportunities.

Yager Slough

Water levels: The water level is near crest elevation.

Vegetation: They main marsh has good emergent vegetation but flooding conditions this year may of reduced submergent growth.

Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area. Small boats have been launched from the highway ROW but is not recommended with normal traffic on the road.

Notes: Hunters should consider the good walk-in hunting conditions with most all large and small wetland having good water and above normal flooded vegetation in some areas.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Rush Lake

Water levels: Rush Lake has been at crest elevation or slightly above.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is good but flooding conditions may of limited submergent growth this year in the main basin limiting waterfowl food supply to a degree. Open pockets with better vegetation will have good waterfowl habitat.

Boat Access: At this time it appears boat access and the channel are ok for large and small boats with outboard motors.

Notes: Next year if conditions allow the goal will be to lower the water level to improve habitat throughout the growing season.

IOWA RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Steve Woodruff, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/31/18

BENTON COUNTY

Dudgeon Lake

Water levels: Water levels are below flood stage.

Vegetation: Most vegetation has been impaired by high water.

Boat Access: Pre-scout before using ramps.

Notes: Boards have been installed at the water control structure

JOHNSON COUNTY

Hawkeye Wildlife Area

Water levels: The reservoir level is 705.49 msl and will be dropping throughout the weekend.. Be careful of floating flood debris.

Vegetation: Most vegetation will be covered up with flood waters.

Boat Access: Boat access is very limited as roads are flooded in various locations. Pre-scouting is highly recommended.

Notes:

Swan Lake

Water levels: The water level is good and should maintain a normal to above normal level.

Vegetation: The marsh has emergent vegetation on the perimeter.

Boat Access: There is no boat access on this area.

Notes:

TAMA COUNTY

Otter Creek

Water levels: Marshes are at crest or above crest

Vegetation: Most vegetation is covered by high water.

Boat Access: Pre-scouting advised.

Notes: Segment 7 is accessible with small boats. The road is closed on barn road leading to segment 6 on the east end of the marsh. Completion of road work was delayed due to wet weather conditions. Pre-scouting is advised.

MAQUOKETA WILDLIFE UNIT

Curt Kemmerer, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/30/18

CLINTON COUNTY

Goose Lake

Water levels: North Pool: Water levels are at full pool.
Center Pool: Water levels are at full pool.
South Pool: Water levels are at full pool.

Vegetation: North Pool: Emergent vegetation is thick again this year and may cause some difficulty for boats.
Center Pool: Typical cattail ring with lily pads covering the open water center.

Boat Access: Boat access should be best on the center pool, if they can get through the channel. Floating mats of cattail have blocked access at times this fall. Smaller boats with mud motors will be able to get around on the north pool.

Notes:

JACKSON COUNTY

Green Island

Water levels: The water levels are very high across the entire area.

Vegetation: The vegetation is typical of yet another high water year. The area should continue to open up with the very high water and vegetation dying back.

Boat Access: Accessible by all types of boats.

Notes: Use caution as you may be hunting in water over your waders.

JONES COUNTY

Muskrat Slough

Water levels: Water levels are at full pool.

Vegetation: The cattail fringe remains unchanged, with very little submerged vegetation throughout the open water part of the marsh.

Boat Access: Boat access should be normal.

Notes:

SCOTT COUNTY

Princeton

Water levels: The water level is well above full pool.

Vegetation: Vegetation is similar to the last two years, which also saw prolonged high water during the summer. The rice stands are still expanding. The area has really opened up with the high water and vegetation dying back.

Boat Access: The area should be accessible by all types of boats.

Notes: Use caution as you may be hunting in water over your waders.

MISSOURI RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Doug Chafa, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/20/18

HARRISON COUNTY

Round Lake

Water levels: Shallow water marsh, at crest.

Vegetation: Lots of emergent vegetation.

Boat Access: Gravel ramp accessible by small boats.

Notes:

Nobles Lake

Water levels: Lake is at crest.

Vegetation: Open water.

Boat Access: Gravel ramp accessible by small boats.

Notes:

Tyson Bend

Water levels: Missouri River is high, flow is 63,600 cfs almost double median flow of 32,000 cfs. Forecast is for river levels to remain high in the near term. River levels have dropped 1.5 to 2 ft in the last week (Blair gauge).

Vegetation: Open water and some flooded willows.

Boat Access: Tyson Bend ramp inaccessible due to high flows through chute. Backwater access from River.

Notes:

Soldier Bend

Water levels: Missouri River is high, flow is 63,600 cfs almost double median flow of 32,000 cfs. Forecast is for river levels to remain high in the near term. River levels have dropped 1.5 to 2 ft in the last week (Blair gauge).

Vegetation: Open water

Boat Access: Remington boat ramp (Harrison CCB) just downstream from Soldier bend is usable. Parking lot was under water this summer but river level are down to the top of the ramp.

Notes:

California Bend

Water levels: Missouri River is high, flow is 63,600 cfs almost double median flow of 32,000 cfs. Forecast is for river levels to remain high in the near term. River levels have dropped 1.5 to 2 ft in the last week (Blair gauge).

Vegetation: Open water.

Boat Access: Access from river only.

Notes:

MONONA COUNTY

Badger Lake

Water levels: 1 ft above crest. Heavy rains in the Whiting area have created a lot of sheet water in the local crop fields.

Vegetation: Badger Lake has a lot of emergent vegetation around the perimeter.

Boat Access: Gravel boat ramps (3) provide access for small boats.

Notes:

Louisville Bend

Water levels: Decatur gauge at 28.24 down 0.75 ft in the last week of August. Missouri River is flowing at 63,700 cfs almost double normal flows and it appears the high flows will continue. High water overtopped the dike most of the summer.

Vegetation: Open water.

Boat Access: small gravel ramp on the south end provides access to small boats.

Notes:

Tieville Bend

Water levels: Decatur gauge at 28.24 down 0.75 ft in the last week August.. Missouri River is flowing at 63,700 cfs almost double normal flows and it appears the high flows will continue. High river flows are connecting Tieville/Upper Decatur wetland with Missouri River.

Vegetation: Open water and flooded willows and weeds.

Boat Access: The concrete river ramp and the gravel marsh ramp are usable.

Notes:

WOODBURY COUNTY

Browns Lake

Water levels: At crest.

Vegetation: Lots of cattails.

Boat Access: Concrete boat ramps on the south end.

Notes:

Luton WMA

Water levels: High water in the wetland basins and sheet water out into the surrounding vegetation.

Vegetation: Variety of open water and cattail and bullrush fringed wetlands.

Boat Access: Walk in access only, no boat access.

Notes:

Snyder Bend WMA

Water levels: Crest. High river levels are supporting high water levels in Snyder's Bend.

Vegetation: Open water.

Boat Access: Concrete ramp in the Snyder's Bend County Park.

Notes: Waterfowl refuge on the south end. The IA-NE state line runs through the lake, so a portion of the lake is Nebraska.

Winnebago Bend WMA

Water levels: Missouri River flow currently (08/28) at 63,700 cfs, nearly double the normal flow of 32,000 cfs. Sioux City gauge at 20.4 ft, up a half a foot in the last week in August.

Vegetation: River flooding up into vegetation in the former oxbow wetland.

Boat Access: Very steep gravel ramp on the south end for boat access.

Notes:

Table Marsh WMA

Water levels: Wetlands are full and there is sheet water outside of the basins.

Vegetation: Variety of cattail choked and open water.

Boat access: Walk-in access only, no boat access.

Notes:

Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit - Wetland Habitat Conditions

Matt Dollison, Wildlife Biologist

Observations from Oct. 31, 2018

Fremont County

Riverton – Main Area

Water levels: The water level is at or above full pool.

Vegetation: There is an abundance of annual smartweed, barnyard grass, and other beneficial plants growing over much of the area. Aerial spraying completed the past 3 years has done a great job of reducing the amount of river bulrush and cattail that was present.

Boat Access: Given the high water level almost the entire marsh should be usable by boats. However there is quite a bit of vegetation outside of the channels since we were not able to mow/disk most of the usual openings because it was too wet.

Notes:

Riverton – Jensen Tract

Water levels: The water level is at full pool.

Vegetation: The vegetation is dense, but wildlife unit staff were able to mow (not disk) all of the traditional channels and openings. The habitat conditions of the marsh are looking great, as there is a good amount of annual smartweed and barnyard grass present that should be very attractive for dabbling ducks.

Boat Access: Given the high water level almost the entire marsh should be usable by boats, and we were able to mow all of the traditional openings and channels so the vegetation should be manageable even for large boats with outboard motors.

Notes:

Forney Lake

Water levels: At last check (Oct. 2nd) the marsh was 3.5 feet deep in the hunting area.

Vegetation: There is a 35 acre pocket of open water, north of the boat ramp along the refuge line, and much of the river bulrush to the east is thin enough that boats can get through it.

Boat Access: Almost all boats should be able to use the marsh.

Notes: Given the high water level, hunters should check the depth before jumping out of their boats as the water level may be over chest wader level.

Copeland Bend

Water levels: The land on the river side of the levee has received significant flood waters from the Missouri River which has created a large amount of wetlands for waterfowl. Depths vary greatly from less than 3 inches to over 6 feet.

Vegetation: Earlier flood waters wiped out a good amount vegetation that would have provided valuable food for dabbling ducks, but there are plenty of flooded willows on the edges of the wetlands that should provide ample concealment for hunters.

Boat Access: There is no boat access, except possibly by dragging a kayak/very small boat.

Notes: Water depths throughout the excavated wetlands are inconsistent and several sudden deep areas exist.

M. U. Payne (Formerly Frazer's Bend)

Water levels: The land on the river side of the levee is almost completely filled with water from flooding by the Missouri River. Depths vary from less than 6 inches to over 6 feet.

Vegetation: Earlier flood waters wiped out a good amount vegetation that would have provided valuable food for dabbling ducks, but there are plenty of willows and cottonwoods in the flood water that should provide ample concealment for hunters, if they can find a spot where the water isn't too deep.

Boat Access: Kayaks or small boats could potentially be dragged from the south parking lot.

Notes: Water depths throughout the excavated wetlands are inconsistent and several sudden deep areas exist.

Cooper Creek

Water levels: There is good water in the middle and south cells.

Vegetation: Valuable wetland veg exists in pockets in the center of the middle cell.

Boat Access: Almost all walk-in hunting. Dragging small boats/kayaks could be an option in some areas.

Notes:

Auldon Bar

Water levels: Flood water from the Missouri River has created a significant amount of wetlands on the river side of the levee on the south half of the area.

Vegetation: Quite a bit of valuable wetland vegetation has been flooded, but good hunter concealment cover is somewhat limited.

Boat Access: Walk-in access only.

Notes: Without more rain or flooding, most of these high quality wetland areas will likely dry up in the not too distant future.

Draper Bottoms

Water levels: Recent rainfall has created many wetlands on the area.

Vegetation: Quite a bit of valuable wetland vegetation has been flooded.

Boat Access: Walk-in access only.

Notes: The dikes have been mowed, but will require a very long walk for the public to access the best wetland areas.

Mills County

Willow Slough

Water levels: The basin is at full pool currently.

Vegetation: There are cattails on about half the basin.

Boat Access: All boats should be able to use the marsh.

Notes: Cattails will provide cover for hunters.

Haynie Slough

Water levels: The basin is full of water making some portions of it, too deep for chest waders.

Vegetation: High water levels in past years have created significant open water in the middle of the basin, and caused the remainder of the water to be covered with cattails. These cattails should provide plenty of concealment for hunters.

Boat Access: Almost all walk-in hunting. Dragging small boats/kayaks could be an option in some areas.

Notes: Very few ducks in the area.

Noddleman Island

Water levels: The wetland excavations are currently full.

Vegetation: Earlier high water wiped out a good amount of vegetation that would have provided valuable food for dabbling ducks, but there is plenty of vegetation around the excavations to conceal hunters.

Boat Access: Almost all walk-in hunting. Dragging small boats/kayaks could be an option.

Notes: Water depths throughout the excavated wetlands are inconsistent and several sudden deep areas exist.

St. Mary's Island

Water levels: Recent heavy rainfall and flooding from the Missouri River have created a significant amount of shallow wetlands on the area, especially on the south end around new Hwy 34.

Vegetation: Much of the wetlands have vegetation present that should make them attractive for dabbling ducks. Hunter concealment cover is somewhat limited.

Boat Access: Walk-in access only.

Notes: Without more rain or flooding, most of these high quality wetland areas will likely dry up in the not too distant future.

ODESSA WILDLIFE UNIT

Andy Robbins, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/31/18

DES MOINES COUNTY

Blackhawk Bottoms

Water levels: Higher than normal due to flooding on the Mississippi River. Conditions are subject to change based on Mississippi River levels.

Vegetation: Several major flood events on the Mississippi River this year has destroyed most of the vegetation in Patterson Lake and Round Pond.

Boat Access: Accessible to mid sized boats.

Notes:

LOUISA COUNTY

Cone Marsh

Water levels: Near normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation is found throughout the marsh. Overall excellent habitat conditions.

Boat Access: Accessible to small and mid-sized boats. Mud motors will likely be required due to the dense vegetation.

Notes:

Klum Lake

Water levels: Pumping has brought the water level up to normal fall crest.

Vegetation: A good mix of emergent and submergent vegetation. There is also a decent amount of smartweed, millet, and bidens present. Good habitat conditions.

Boat Access: Accessible to small boats. Mud motors likely will be required due to areas of dense submergent vegetation.

Notes: Aerial spraying of dense stands of cattails over the past few years has opened up the wetland significantly, creating much more diverse waterfowl habitat.

Odessa Wildlife Area

Water levels: MAJOR FLOODING. Currently 7 feet above normal fall crest.

Vegetation: None, due to prolonged high water throughout the summer and recent major flooding.

Boat Access: All boat ramps and accesses are flooded. The Toolesboro access road is closed.

Notes:

MUSCATINE COUNTY

Wiese Slough

Water levels: Near normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Recent major flooding on the Cedar River has washed out most of the vegetation.

Boat Access: Accessible to mid-sized boats.

Notes:

PRAIRIE LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Rob Patterson Wildlife Technician Updated: 9/20/18

CLAY COUNTY

Barringer Slough

Water levels: The slough is currently at crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense on this system.

Boat Access: Will be a challenge for early duck and goose seasons, but should improve later into the season.

Notes: It is highly recommended to complete pre-season scouting.

Dan Green Slough

Water levels: The slough is currently at crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has been decreasing the last 3 years, but submergent vegetation is dense.

Boat Access: The Slough is currently at crest.

Notes: It is highly recommended to complete pre-season scouting.

DU Marsh

Water levels: The marsh is at crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense on this system.

Boat Access: Not feasible, good walk-in opportunities.

Notes:

Trumbull Lake-Smith Slough Complex

Water levels: Trumbull Lake and Smith's Slough are at crest, including most of the smaller wetlands in this complex.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense on this complex. Except on Trumbull Lake which has lost significant vegetation throughout.

Boat Access: Boat access is feasible on larger water bodies, but may be difficult early in the season.

Notes:

EMMET COUNTY

Cheever Lake

Water levels: The lake is at crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Will be difficult due to vegetation for larger boats early in the season.

Notes: The boat ramp access will be difficult at times as vegetation floats in and out over the season. Pre-season scouting is highly recommended prior to arriving at this access.

Four-Mile Lake Complex

Water levels: The lake is at crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Will be difficult due to vegetation.

Notes: The boat ramp access will be difficult this season due to large floating mats of vegetation. Pre-season scouting is highly recommended prior to arriving at this access.

Ingham-High Complex

Water levels: Water levels are at crest for the majority of the large and small wetlands/lakes in this complex.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation stands will vary dependent upon the area.

Boat Access: Boat access will be difficult in some areas early in the season, but should improve as the season progresses.

Notes: Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged.

Iowa Lake-Goose Lake Complex

Water levels: The majority of the wetlands/lakes in this complex are near crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation stands will vary dependent upon the area.

Boat Access: The majority of the wetlands/lakes in this complex are near crest.

Notes: Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged.

Tuttle Lake Complex

Water levels: The majority of the wetlands/lakes in this complex are near crest.

Vegetation: Most wetlands within this complex will have dense mats of submergent vegetation.

Boat Access: Most of the areas are walk in.

Notes:

PALO ALTO COUNTY

Blue-wing Marsh

Water levels: The marsh is currently being drawn down. Current water levels are well below crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Boat access will not be feasible during draw down.

Notes: Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged. Walk in opportunities should still be available this fall.

Dewey's Pasture Complex

Water levels: Most wetlands are at full crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Most are walk-in areas, however some are conducive for smaller boats.

Notes:

Fallow Marsh

Water levels:The marsh is at full crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Not feasible

Notes:

Rush Lake

Water levels:The lake is at full crest.

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Boat access will be difficult in the early seasons until colder temperatures decrease submergent vegetation.

Notes: The main channel should be feasible for most boats, however once boats leave the main channel access will be more difficult. Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged.

RATHBUN WILDLIFE UNIT

Heath Van Waus, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/9/18

APPANOOSE COUNTY

Rathbun Lake Complex

Water levels: Wetlands are now full with the recent rain and high river flow

Vegetation: Numerous acres of flooded vegetation on main lake. All other wetlands are now full but should reseed some of the next week after structures catch up from the recent rains. Most of the vegetation is now under water with the recent flooding. Wetlands should go down over the next or so to provide good amounts of flooded vegetation for hunting.

Boat Access: Boatable water on main lake with high levels of flooded vegetation. All other wetlands on the Rathbun complex with boat ramp access are now boatbale with the recent rains.

Notes:

Sedan Bottoms

Water levels: Wetlands now have levels that range from 2-24 inches.
Vegetation: Both the refuge and areas open to public now have significant amounts of flooded vegetation. Water levels vary throughout the system but should provide copious amounts of huntable water.
Boat Access: Walk in only
Notes:

RED ROCK WILDLIFE UNIT

Todd Gosselink, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/31/18

JASPER & POLK COUNTIES

Colfax WMA and Chichaqua Bottoms Green Belt WMA

Water levels: Wetlands are full due to recent rains and high river levels
Vegetation: Flooding during June and July set some vegetation back, but most has recovered with decent aquatic vegetation in wet areas.
Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area.
Notes: Because these wetlands are on the river floodplain and in close proximity to the river channel, they are often underlain by porous soils and water levels are dependent upon the river water level, which currently very full.

Rock Creek Marsh

Water levels: The water level is determined by the elevation of Rock Creek Lake, which is above crest.
Vegetation: The main marsh is in an open water condition, but do to heavy sedimentation, areas have good stands of emergent vegetation, primarily arrowhead.
Boat Access: Boat access is from the State Park boat ramps. Once north of the bridge, medium and larger boats with outboard motors may have difficulty because of silt deposition.

MARION COUNTY

Red Rock Reservoir

Water levels: The reservoir lake pool is currently at 769, and is slowly dropping. The pool is currently projected to crest at 765 by Nov. 12. The DNR has requested that the USACE hold the pool at 744 whenever the lake is going down, but it won't likely get t this low until later December. There are currently unique opportunites for hunters to use areas that are typically unavailable at normal fall pool rises due to the current high lake levels. We are currently limited to a maximum 2 foot raise request (as allowable in the current USACE regulations manual), but are working with the the USACE to increase this level in the future. Current revisions of the USACE regulations manual are being conducted, with potential changes in the next year. Updated water levels and river flows can be found at:
<http://rivergages.mvr.usace.army.mil/WaterControl/Districts/MVR/Forecast/pelforecast.html>

Vegetation: Vegetation is very good with the current high levels, with flooded crop fields on private land in the reservoir bottoms.

Boat Access: The boat ramps at “Box Cars” & Bennington are currently inaccessible, but boats can be launched off the road at Bennington. The boat ramp at Swan Flats at “OK Hill” is currently under 20 feet of water, but boats can be launched from the gravel road, but area is large open water lake.

Notes: With this record high lake pool in the fall, hunters will need to hunt in non-traditional spots, further upstream in the bays or closer to Des Moines or the South River Corridor where the waterfowl are using the flooded vegetation. We have ceased doing waterfowl surveys due to the large expanse of the lake, making surveys impossible.

Swan Refuge

Water levels: The refuge is currently a giant lake.

Vegetation: Water is too high to have any useable flooded vegetation, except along the edges.

Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area since it is not open to hunting.

Notes:

WARREN COUNTY

Banner Flats WMA

Water levels: The wetlands on this area are oxbows or constructed basins and currently have good water. Water levels will vary depending upon the weather and the proximity of the wetland to the river channel.

Vegetation: Good stands of moist soil and emergent plants have developed over the summer due to minimal flooding of the South River.

Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

Red Rock WMA South River Hartford Bottoms

Water levels: A majority of this area has the lake backed into it, creating excellent vegetation for waterfowl. There are numerous oxbows and constructed wetlands on this area. Most wetlands are very full at this time due to the wet conditions.

Vegetation: Good stands of moist soil plants have developed on much of the area. With continued adequate rain, this area will be extremely attractive to waterfowl.

Boat Access: There are no boat accesses on this area.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

Red Rock WMA Sub-impoundments Little Hartford and Big Hartford (Richard’s Marsh)

Water levels: Big Hartford (Richard’s Marsh) is currently deep water due to the flooding, with water overtopping the dike and the parking lot. Hunters can launch boats from the gravel road at

current lake levels. Little Hartford wetland has good levels of water, with water on the access road, but it is too shallow of a grade to launch a boat.

Vegetation: There is good flooded vegetation at the marshes due to the high lake levels, but hunters will have to hunt in non traditional sites, since the typical marsh hunting areas are open lake water.

Boat Access: Boat access is currently accessible at Big Hartford from the gravel road due to the high waters, with none at Little Hartford due to high waters.

Notes:

Runnells Marsh

Water levels: Runnells marsh is currently flooded with the boat ramps inaccessible.

Vegetation: Vegetation is decent in the flooded fringes of the area, but the marsh is large open water.

Boat Access: There two concrete boat ramps, but are overtopped by lake flood waters.

Notes: Runnells marsh also provides decent walk-in hunting opportunities.

SAYLORVILLE WILDLIFE UNIT

Josh Gansen, Wildlife Biologist. Updated: 10/2/2018

GREENE COUNTY

Dunbar Slough WMA – Main Wetland

Water levels: Currently at or above fall crest

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: New concrete ramp was installed to help improve access. Dense vegetation will limit access of large outboard motors

Notes:

Dunbar Slough WPA

Water levels: Currently at or above fall crest

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Small and Medium sized boats

Notes:

Goose Lake WMA

Water levels: Currently at or above fall crest

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: All sizes

Notes:

Snake Creek WMA

Water levels: At or above fall crest

Vegetation: Dense stands of emergent vegetation are present.

Boat Access: There is no boat ramp.

Notes:

GUTHRIE COUNTY

Bays Branch WMA

Water levels: Currently at or above fall crest

Vegetation: Limited emergent vegetation on the edges.

Boat Access: All sizes

Notes:

Lakin Slough

Water levels: Currently at or above fall crest.

Vegetation: Limited emergent vegetation on the edges.

Boat Access: All sizes

Notes:

McCord Pond

Water levels: At or above fall crest

Vegetation: Both emergent and submergent vegetation are dense.

Boat Access: Small to medium

Notes:

POLK COUNTY

Saylorville Reservoir

Water levels: Fall pool is normally 838.5 Currently the Flood pool is 868 and rising. Levels will drop daily if heavy rains cease.

Vegetation: Normal vegetation was flooded out this summer. Currently flood willows in North of Hwy 17 are providing some habitat

Boat Access: Any

Notes: Conditions change daily. Visit www.rivergauges.com to view current conditions

STORY COUNTY

Hendrickson Marsh

Water levels: At or above fall crest

Vegetation: Dense stands of emergent vegetation are present.

Boat Access: Any

Notes:

SUGEMA WILDLIFE UNIT

Jeff Glaw, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 9/19/18

KEOKUK COUNTY

Hayesville Bend WMA

Water levels: Water is at crest.

Vegetation: little to no aquatic vegetation due to sustained flooding earlier in year

Boat Access: N/A

Notes: South Skunk River is back in it's banks.

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Lake Sugema

Water levels: Currently at crest.

Vegetation: Lots of lotus in most of the shallow areas on main lake.

Boat Access: North boat ramp is closed due to construction project. South and west ramps are open.

Notes:

DeVoss/Foster WMA

Water levels: At crest

Vegetation: Good growth of vegetation in the wetland area.

Boat Access: N/A

Notes: Hunttable water in wetland now.

Fox River WMA

Water levels: All wetlands are at crest.

Vegetation: Good growth of vegetation in the wetland area.

Boat Access: N/A

Notes:

UPPER IOWA WILDLIFE UNIT

Terry Haindfield, Wildlife Biologist Updated: 10/23/18

ALLAMAKEE

Mississippi River – Pool 9

Water levels: Pool 9 is high and water levels are starting to fall. Most islands are currently under water.

Vegetation: Average.

Boat Access: The Lansing Village Creek ramp construction is complete and the ramp is open.

Notes: New Albin landing is closed due to high water.

CLAYTON COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pool 10

Water levels: Pool 10 is high and water levels are starting to fall. Most islands are currently under water.

Vegetation: Average.

Boat Access: Sny Magill landing is closed due to the high water.

Notes:

WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Cardinal Marsh

Water levels: Normal to high. Renovations recently completed on Segments A,B,C, and D.

Vegetation: Excellent.

Boat Access: The main marsh is accessible to small to medium sized boats with a cement ramp.

Notes: Very limited parking at main marsh ramp.
