

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
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Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

June 17, 2003

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Editor's Note: If you have questions about this report, please contact Alan Foster at 515-281-8874, or by email at alan.foster@dnr.state.ia.us.

PHEASANT NESTING OUTLOOK

BOONE - Last year, Iowa's pheasant population doubled following a very mild winter and average spring weather. And the good news is, this past winter and spring offer the same optimism for this year's pheasant hatch, said Todd Bogenschutz, DNR upland wildlife biologist.

“Our pheasant population typically shows increases following mild winters (December through March) with springs (April through May) that are dryer and warmer than normal,” Bogenschutz said. This past winter was mild by Iowa standards, with cumulative mean snowfall 34 percent below the 1961-90 average, said Bogenschutz. Statewide April through May precipitation averaged 7.9 inches, or about three-fourths of an inch above normal, while the mean temperature was 54 degrees, or 1 degree below normal.

“The winter was excellent because we had a good carryover of existing brood stock with the lack of snow, but the spring was cooler and wetter than we like to see for nesting,” said Bogenschutz. “Thus, we have a plus for winter and a slight negative for spring nesting. Based on these data we are predicting the statewide pheasant count should increase this fall, but I doubt the counts will double like they did in 2002.”

The data shows rainfall has been close to normal in northern, eastern and south-central Iowa, while temperatures have been about 1 to 1.5 degrees below normal. Central, west-central and southwest Iowa rainfall was 1 to 2 inches above normal. Given

these patterns, Bogenschutz expects counts in the latter areas to show smaller increases than other regions.

Bogenschutz said Iowa's pheasant population made a major recovery in 2002, increasing from an all-time low of 14 birds per survey route in 2001 to last fall's statewide estimate of 32 birds per survey route. Bogenschutz said this year's statewide index could reach 40-birds-plus per survey route this fall barring any major changes in the weather pattern. He said Iowa pheasant hunters generally have very good success anytime the DNR's roadside index exceeds 40 birds per route.

Bogenschutz warned predictions based on weather data are incorrect two or three times a decade and that the DNR's August roadside survey is the best gauge of what upland populations will be this fall. The August roadside numbers will be posted on the wildlife page on the DNR website by Sept. 15.

For more information, contact Bogenschutz at 515-432-2823.

CHANNEL CATFISH BEGINNING TO SPAWN AT RATHBUN HATCHERY

MORAVIA – Romance is in the air for roughly 250 channel catfish at the Rathbun fish hatchery that are beginning their annual spawn. The DNR hopes the 2003 spawn will result in about 1 million catfish fry by the end of June.

Hatchery staff placed cream cans in the catfish ponds Monday and will monitor the cans three days per week until the spawn is complete. The cream cans serve as a nest for the captive catfish. In the wild, channel catfish will search out hollow logs or cavities in the riverbank as places to spawn.

“Male catfish are pretty aggressive during the spawn,” said Chris Clouse with the Rathbun hatchery. “The males will either chase or, in some cases, drag females into the cream can to spawn. And the males can spawn with more than one female.”

Males will remain in the cream can after the female has released her eggs to guard the nest. Clouse said it can be a bit dicey to get the males out of the cans so workers can retrieve the eggs.

The eggs will then get the “Rathbun Process.” Catfish eggs are laid in a gelatinous mass resembling thick tapioca. After collection, the eggs are placed in a chemical solution to remove the gelatinous material. The eggs can then be placed in the jars that incubated walleye eggs two months earlier. Channel catfish eggs will hatch in six to 10 days.

These newly hatched catfish will remain at the hatchery for up to 15 months. By next May, the 4- to 5-inch fish will be moved to county conservation board lakes, placed

in cages and grown to 10 to 12 inches before being released in the lake. Catfish remaining at the hatchery will be stocked when they reach 7 to 10 inches.

The DNR stocks more than 250,000 channel catfish statewide, in nearly all the lakes managed by the DNR, except the federal reservoirs. An additional 100,000 catfish are used for the farm pond stocking program. Excess catfish are traded with other states.

CATCHING AND STOCKING FISH

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The fish go in. The fish go out. With the bluegill spawn going full speed, bass right behind the, and walleye and catfish starting to bite again, it seems like the fish are being pulled out of Iowa lakes and streams faster than they can be replaced.

Actually, without extensive stocking, that *would* be the case. At Lake Macbride, 75,000 2-inch walleye fingerlings were stocked earlier this month. Another 160,000 went into Coralville Reservoir, nearby. Within a couple years, they will be in the 14- to 15-inch range, at which anglers start keeping them. “We see very low reproduction in our lakes and rivers,” explains Paul Sleeper, area fisheries biologist for the Department of Natural Resources. “With the fishing pressure they receive, we would never have fishable populations if we did not carry out these annual maintenance stockings.”

Walleyes are the anglers’ favorite, when it comes to stocking. Lakes across Iowa are stocked with 103 *million* fry each spring; fry hatched from eggs taken at Spirit, Okoboji, Clear, Rathbun and Storm lakes in early April. While the majority of these will end up as another fish’s meal on the food chain, the sheer numbers ensure that a good supply will survive to maturity. Meanwhile, nearly 1.3 million more are kept at the hatchery. More than 740,000 are being stocked in river environments right about now. The stockings range from a couple thousand being dropped into the Winnebago River in Cedar County to 37,000 in the Little Sioux River. Another 200,000 go to lakes.

Later this summer, 320,000 will be stocked after reaching the 5 to 8-inch range. Come fall, a final 3,000 go into selected Iowa rivers at 8 inches to bolster populations there. Raising fish to the larger sizes increases costs, but pays off with the increased survival once they hit the water. At 2 inches, the little walleyes still feed on zooplankton. Eventually, they add a little “meat” to their diets. “We’ve had phenomenal growth in the rivers, with all the little minnows they support,” says Sleeper.

While walleyes get much of the attention, other species have a view from the inside of the stocking truck, too. Approximately 111,000 3-inch northern pike are being released this season; with lakes getting a little over half of them. Muskies are released in several lakes, with hopes of a trophy population being developed. At Pleasant Creek

Lake, northwest of Cedar Rapids, 500 muskies in the 10 to 14-inch range were dropped in. Meanwhile, past stockings are paying off. Anglers there have caught muskies 40, 42 and 44½ inches in the last couple weeks.

Hybrid wipers are prized by anglers on the Saylorville and Coralville reservoirs. The fish, a cross between ocean-stripped bass and white bass, are fast growing and hard fighters when hooked. Saylorville received a shipment of 1.8 million fry from Oklahoma. Any surplus wipers, now up to 2-inch fingerlings, could go into Coralville over the next few days. Due to the out of state supply source, and critical transportation needs, wiper stocking is on a “hit or miss” basis from year to year.

Even channel catfish see the inside of the stocking truck before the inside of your live well. They need a little more human involvement after leaving the hatchery, though. In 47 lakes across 33 Iowa counties, 81,000 catfish are raised in floating cages. At Kent Park in Johnson County, 3,900 2-to 3-inch catfish were stocked a week ago. They receive a special pelletized feed each day from county conservation board workers. By September, the fish will be 8 inches long, out of predation range, and will be released into the lake. The county involvement has allowed the catfish program to grow. Lack of hatchery space would mean only a fraction of those ‘cats would be raised to stocking size.

For the most part, bluegills, bass and crappies reproduce in most Iowa waters. Stocking the predator fish, though, keeps numbers thinned, to prevent stunted populations. The costs of the hatchery and stocking programs are paid by anglers through their fishing licenses and excise fees on fishing related equipment. You see the results, each time your pole bends and you have to reel in another one.

Warmer Weather, More Snake Sightings

As hot summer weather makes its appearance, snake activity picks up as well. With it come calls concerned about a “rattlesnake” in the yard. “It has been years since a rattlesnake has been confirmed in Johnson County,” reminds DNR wildlife biologist Tim Thompson. “Snakes get more active, more aggressive in warm weather. I’m getting ‘rattlesnake’ calls that end up being fox snakes. Fox snakes will vibrate their tails when aggressive. If they are in gravel or leaves, the noise might be mistaken for a rattle. Bull snakes react in a similar way. Both are non-poisonous.”

Thompson notes that a rattlesnake’s head is triangular in appearance, and that it actually *has* rattles, rings of shed skin, on its tail. Timber rattlesnakes prefer more secluded, rocky habitat and are rarely sighted in Iowa away from bluffy crags along the larger rivers in the state, particularly northeast and southern Iowa.

While fox snakes can reach a pretty hefty size — Thompson saw one Wednesday nearly 2 inches in diameter and about 3 feet long — they are not harmful to humans. On the contrary, they should be welcome around the yard. “Most snakes eat mice, voles;

generally the critters you *don't* want around your house,” says Thompson. “The smaller ones consume crickets and other insects.”

COME JOIN IN ON PRAIRIE INVENTORY FUN!

The 2003 State Forest Prairie Walk will take place at 9 a.m. June 27 at the Loess Hills State Forest Visitor Center in Pisgah. The event will be led by 10 group leaders and cover more than 1,500 acres of prairies on the state forest. The goal is to have an enjoyable, educational and adventurous day. The event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is intended develop a good listing of species diversity and help in the management decisions of these rare resources.

Volunteers will go to their assigned prairie ridges and take random sampling inventory plots of the prairie species on the site, trying to find as many species as possible, then proceed to other sites assigned to that group. There will be some checklist of species available that may be found on the areas. This is to be a fun, informative, learning day in the prairie on the state forest.

Things to bring: identification books, cameras, lunch, 1 meter hoops for surveying, compass, hiking boots, note pads and bug spray.

For more information, contact Brent Olson, DNR area forester, at 712-456-2924.

IHEIA TO HOLD FOURTH ANNUAL BANQUET JUNE 28

AMES – The Iowa Hunter Education Instructor Association (IHEIA) will hold its annual membership meeting and awards banquet June 28 at the Best Western Starlight Motel, I-35 exit 113, in Ames.

The membership meeting and elections will begin at 3 p.m. and is open to all Iowa DNR-certified hunter education instructors. To vote or hold office, one must be a member of the association. New members may join any time prior to voting. Each of the six districts will elect one member to serve on the board of directors. A general election will be held to select a new vice-president and secretary.

Social hour will begin at 5 p.m. with the awards banquet and auction to follow at 6 p.m. A buffet-style dinner will be served. Awards will be given to honor instructors nominated by their peers for outstanding service. There will also be door prizes and an auction, which includes firearms, artists' prints and clothing.

The IHEIA was created in 1998 to improve the overall hunter education program in Iowa. The group supports the DNR and efforts of instructors throughout Iowa and provides information on important hunting issues. Iowa's hunter education program began in 1960. Since hunter education became mandatory in 1983, hunting

accidents have been on a downward trend. Approximately 1,700 volunteer hunter education instructors certify up to 14,000 students each year statewide.

Board Members of IHEIA are John Sears, Ottumwa, president; Will Williams, Council Bluffs, president-elect; Randy Jimenez, Indianola, treasurer; Laura Bishop, Des Moines, membership chair; Gerald Pallesen, Marcus; Dave Amick, Bronson; Kevin Polley, Riceville; Robert Burns, Cedar Rapids; Kevin Hoffman, Carroll, Dave Hopp, Glenwood; Bill Sterner, Wilton; James Onorato, Salem; Terry Burleson, Ames; Don Shelley, Earlham; Ray Thode, Des Moines; Keven Arrowsmith, Boone; Dale Pike, Bettendorf; Dean Ross, Jefferson; and Thomas Robinson, Des Moines.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of June 17, 2003

www.iowadnr.com

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Northeast

Mississippi River: The water in Pool 10 is 75 degrees, stable and relatively clear. In **Pools 9-11**, walleye, channel catfish and freshwater drum are being caught along the main channel border and wing dams. Use night crawlers for walleye and drum and prepared stink baits for catfish. Some walleyes are also hitting crank baits. Bluegills and rock bass are still being caught on the spawning beds, although the size has decreased somewhat. To catch these fish, quietly move into the back bays of backwater lakes and flip a small jig with a small portion of a night crawler attached to the hook. Slowly bounce the jig up and down on the retrieve. Great action for the kids! **Pools 12 to 15** are on a slight rise with water temperature in the low 70s. Freshwater drum are being taken on crawlers fished in the wing dams, side channels and sloughs. Fishing for spawning channel catfish is fair using crawlers or leeches fished along the rocks. Walleye fishing is good on the wing dams using leeches, crawlers and crank baits. Largemouth bass fishing is good using spinner baits in woody and vegetated areas in the backwaters or throwing crank baits along the rocky shorelines of the main channel where there is slack water.

Volga River (Fayette): Smallmouth bass fishing is good on small Rapalas.

Turkey and Volga rivers (Fayette and Clayton): Smallmouth bass fishing is good on jigs, Power Worms and grubs.

Cedar River (Mitchell): Smallmouth bass fishing is good.

Cedar (Bremer and Black Hawk), **Shell Rock** (Butler and Bremer) and **West Fork Cedar rivers** (Butler and Black Hawk): Rivers are slightly high, but are excellent for channel catfish on just about any type of bait – live or dead minnows, chicken liver, cheese baits, night crawlers, chubs, shad, etc.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Channel catfishing is good on night crawlers. White bass are hitting small spinners and stump jumpers.

East Lake (Black Hawk): Fair for yellow bass and crappie. An occasional walleye is also being caught.

South Prairie Lake (Black Hawk): Good for crappies and bluegills in 6 to 10 feet of water on jigs tipped with a small minnow or wax worm. Largemouth bass fishing is good with a few over 18 inches being caught.

Casey Lake (Tama): Good for bluegill in 6 to 10 feet of water on jigs and wax worms.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Some large crappies (11-inch-plus) are being taken out of brush piles using marabou jigs tipped with a minnow. Channel catfish are good on night crawlers. White bass (stripers) are very good on stump jumpers and small spinners. Bluegills are good on wax worms or a piece of crawler.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Good to excellent fishing for bluegill, crappies and channel catfish.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Eight- to 10-inch bluegills are hitting small jigs tipped with wax worms or a piece of crawler attached to a small hook and fished under a bobber next to the weed lines.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Bluegill fishing is good to excellent on small jigs tipped with a piece of crawler suspended under a bobber. Largemouth bass fishing is also good.

Trout fishing and stream conditions are excellent. For current trout stocking information, contact the Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-1699, Decorah Hatchery at 563-382-3315 or Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-5736. You can also view the trout stocking calendar on-line by going to www.iowadnr.com, clicking on “**Fish and Fishing**” and then choosing “**Favorite Pages.**”

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson County): Largemouth bass are on their beds and smallmouth bass are in the rocks. Walleye fishing has been fair, with most fish below the 14-inch minimum length limit. Bigger fish are being caught at night in 10 to 14 feet of water. Big Stoney has produced quite a few fish. Some perch are being caught while fishing for walleyes.

Little Spirit Lake (Dickinson County): Anglers are catching walleyes on artificial lures cast toward rocky shorelines or on spinners with Power Baits.

West Okoboji (Dickinson County): Anglers are catching bluegills around boat docks and in Triboji. The best baits are small hair jigs, preferably black. Largemouth bass are starting to bite along the weed lines. The best areas to fish for smallmouth bass are along any rocky point. Walleyes are starting to bite along weed lines on leeches fished under a bobber or crankbaits.

East Okoboji (Dickinson County): Bullheads are being caught on the north end, and bluegills are biting around docks. Some walleyes are being caught at the Highway 9 bridge and along weed lines on minnows or light-colored twister tails.

Five Island Lake (Palo Alto County): Walleye fishing has slowed, but a few are still being caught. Troll imitation minnow lures or other style crank baits. Anglers fishing from shore will have their best luck during the evening hours.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo County): Walleye fishing has improved. Walleye anglers drifting minnows and leeches are catching fish. Crankbaits trolled in 6 to 12 feet of water is also providing good walleye action. Remember, there is a 14-inch minimum length limit on walleye. Yellow bass fishing is spotty, with the best action around the island and on the east shore. Small jigs and pieces of night crawler have been working the best. Channel catfishing has been fair around vegetation in the west end of the lake. Chicken liver and chubs are working best for catfish. Bullhead fishing is good. Use night crawlers on the windy shorelines.

Briggs Woods (Hamilton County): Bluegills are biting on small pieces of night crawlers and small jigs.

Little Wall Lake (Hamilton County): Crappie fishing is good around fish structures. Use small jigs and minnows for the best results.

Eldred Sherwood (Hancock County): Bluegills are hitting on small pieces of crawlers and small jigs. Largemouth bass fishing is good. Spinner baits and top water baits are both catching bass.

Beeds Lake (Franklin County): Crappie fishing is good. Use small tube jigs and minnows around jetties and brush piles for best results. Crappie size ranges from 6 to 10 inches. Bluegills are hitting on small pieces of crawler around the shoreline.

Upper and Lower Pine lakes (Hardin County): Largemouth bass fishing is good on spinner baits, and bluegill fishing is good on pieces of crawlers. Crappie fishing is good around downed trees. Use small jigs and crawlers.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac County): Bullhead fishing is fair in deeper water, and catfishing is good on a variety of baits.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista County): Walleye fishing is fair on live bait or trolling crankbaits on planer boards. Catfishing is good on live bait fished in shallow water near islands and rock piles on.

Brushy Creek (Webster County): A few crappies are being caught; try using tube jigs or live bait. Most of the largemouth bass being caught are close to the 15-inch minimum length limit. Many small catfish are being caught along the shoreline with chicken livers. Walleye fishing is best from late afternoon to sunset. Use slip bobbers with live bait in 10- to 15-feet of water. Sunfish are being caught using tube jigs or live bait.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Green Valley (Union): Anglers are catching big crappies on structures and in 5 to 8 feet of water. Bluegills are being caught using small baits in the spawning beds. Largemouth bass can be caught with crank baits along shore.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): **Bluegills** are being caught on the spawning beds near the back of the bay area, west side of the lake. Channel catfish can be caught off the steep points.

Three Mile (Union): Anglers are catching walleyes using leeches and crankbaits on points near shore and over the fish mounds. Channel catfish are being caught at the north end and in shallow bays on crawlers and under or near fish cleaning stations on cut bait. Crappies are being caught in 7 to 10 feet of water near structure. Largemouth bass fishing is good. Bluegills are being caught using small baits.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish fishing is good in the warmer bays. Walleye fishing is good using leeches on points. Anglers are catching a lot of yellow bass. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Wilson Lake (Taylor): Largemouth bass can be caught on top water lures at dusk and on rubber worms. Bluegills can be caught on the spawning beds.

Little River (Decatur): Crappies are being caught in the rocks and along jetties. Bluegills are on spawning beds and along jetties and can be caught using small baits. Some walleye are being caught using trolled crank baits around the larger points and along the dam.

Slip Bluff (Decatur): Bluegills can be caught on spawning beds at the east corner of the dam.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Bluegills can be caught by drift fishing the channel along the south shore.

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie fishing is fair using tube jigs tipped with a minnow or minnows suspended from a bobber around brush piles or suspended in 8 to 10 feet of water. Bluegill fishing is excellent along shoreline. Look for spawning beds (look like elephant tracks) in 1 to 3 feet of water. Try using small jigs and/or night crawlers. Catfish fishing has been good on livers.

Cold Springs (Cass): Catfish are being caught on livers and prepared baits. Bluegill fishing is fair using small jigs or night crawlers near shore.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Bluegill fishing is good along shallows and lagoons on jigs and crawlers. Anglers are catching good numbers of channel catfish in the evening using prepared baits or crawfish.

Greenfield (Adair): Fishing is good for 8-inch bluegills using jigs and/or night crawlers along shoreline. Anglers are also catching lots of small largemouth bass.

Orient (Adair): Fishing is fair for channel catfish using livers or prepared baits.

Nodaway (Adair): Bluegills are biting on jigs/crawlers along the shore and around structure.

Morman Trail (Adair): Walleye fishing good on cloudy days or toward evening using chartreuse jigs.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is good for 8-inch crappies on jigs/minnows around brush piles. Channel catfish are being caught on liver. Bluegills are being caught on small jigs or a small piece of night crawler on a small hook suspended with a bobber near the shoreline. Bass fishing has been good

Willow (Harrison): Largemouth bass fishing is good using a variety of baits. Bluegill fishing is good along the shoreline. Anglers are catching 1.5-pound channel catfish on livers, crawlers and prepared baits.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good using jigs and/or jig/minnows combinations. Walleye fishing has been excellent using lead-headed jigs and minnows, although most walleye caught are below the 15-inch legal size limit.

Bluegill fishing is good, with the best areas around rocky areas and near woody structure. Channel catfish fishing has been good.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Crappie fishing is good with the best areas around the woody structure along the shorelines. Largemouth bass fishing has also been good using a variety of lures. Some nice-sized bullheads are also in Beaver Lake; try night crawlers around the jetties.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is good with the best fishing in the mornings and evenings. Channel catfish fishing is good using night crawlers in the north end of the lake. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair using top-water lures around shoreline structure.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been fair using night crawlers or wax worms. Redear sunfish fishing has also been fair to good with the best success using wax worms fished close to the bottom around the vegetation. Crappies are being caught using crappie jigs and/or wax worms or worms. Largemouth bass – primarily sub-legalized fish – are being caught on crank baits. A few channel catfish are being caught.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Bluegill and redear have been caught using traditional baits and lures. Some largemouth bass are being caught on crank baits, although as in Lake Ahquabi, most fish are sub-legal.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been fair for boat anglers in deeper water using jigs and minnows. Most fish are in the 9- to 10-inch size. Channel catfish fishing has been good using night crawlers.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie and bluegill fishing has been fair to good with anglers using jigs and minnows and/or worms. Largemouth bass has been slow with the majority taken along the face of the dam using spinners and top-water lures. Channel catfish are being taken in the shallower areas using night crawlers and stink baits.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Crappie fishing is fair using jigs/minnows. Bluegill fishing is good using small hooks tipped with worms. Channel catfish fishing is good. Largemouth bass fishing has been good using top-water lures along the shorelines.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good with most anglers using micro-jigs and wax worms, or bobbers and minnow combinations. White bass fishing has been good either trolling or vertical jigging. Channel catfish fishing has picked up using traditional baits. In the tailwaters, white bass fishing has been excellent using leadheads and twister tails. Channel catfish fishing has picked up using traditional baits and a few flathead catfish have been caught.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): Crappie fishing has been good with the best areas in the marina and in the Teeter Creek area. White bass fishing has been good in the Whitebreast area. Some nice walleye have been caught trolling with a variety of rigs. In the tailwaters Crappie and white bass/wiper fishing has been good using jigs and/or minnows.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River (Pools 16 – 19): River levels have low in pools 16 – 19 on the Mississippi River but there is expected to be a small bump in water levels over the next week. Water temperatures are in the low 70s and warming. Catfishing is good along

rock shorelines with leeches, dew worms and some fish are starting to hit stink bait. Walleye fishing is good on the wing dams. Crappie and bluegill fishing has slowed in many backwater areas due to low water levels. Fishing for white bass is good in the tailwaters of the lock and dams or near the mouths of creeks.

Lake Darling (Washington County): The 6- to 7-inch bluegills are in on the beds. The shallow areas around the riprap seem to be holding the best numbers. Catfish are still biting on chicken liver.

Lake Geode (Henry County): On the warm sunny days the bluegills and redear sunfish are in the shallows, but on the cool rainy days they are moving back out. Not much spawning activity is going on right now. Fishing for these species has been hit and miss. Some nice channel cats have been caught recently. They are in shallow eating the schools of crappies that hatched this spring.

Lake Odessa (Louisa County): The lake is close to normal levels. The Toolesboro road is still closed and will be for a while. The Sand Run boat ramp is usable. Bluegills are done spawning. Fish for them in the deeper waters of Sand Run and some of the channels for some nice 7- to 9-inch fish.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose County): Crappies have been hitting on small jigs along the shoreline. Walleyes have been biting on night crawlers fished behind spinners and also on crankbaits. Channel catfish are biting on night crawlers and cut bait.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren County): Bluegills have moved into the shallows to spawn and have been biting on small jigs. Largemouth bass continue to hit on crankbaits and spinner baits.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska County): Channel catfish are biting on night crawlers and liver. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures such as crankbaits and spinner baits.

Lake Wapello (Davis County): Largemouth bass continue to hit on artificial presentations. Bluegills and crappies are still in 8 to 10 feet of water around submerged structure.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson County): Catfishing continues to be good on shad and minnows close to the rock walls. Crappie fishing has been fair.

Lake Macbride (Johnson County): **Crappie** fishing has been fair with anglers still catching crappies around brush and near the causeway area on jigs and minnows. Catfish are biting throughout the lake on dip baits and crawlers.

Pleasant Creek (Linn County): Walleye fishing is excellent, with many limits being taken on leeches under a slip bobber floated along the old roadbeds. White bass and largemouth bass fishing has been fair on artificial baits and leeches. Bluegills are being caught off of beds in shallow areas of the lake on worms and jigs. Anglers are catching a few crappies around brush and pallet structures.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek County): Catfish have been hitting on paste baits and liver. Bluegills are being caught near the bank on worms. Anglers are catching a few crappies around brush piles. (Anglers are reminded that minnow usage is prohibited).

Union Grove (Tama County): Anglers are catching crappie throughout the lake; some sorting for sizeable fish. Nice bluegills are being caught on worms in the pond south of the lake.

Wapsipinicon River (Jones County): Catfishing has been good on stink bait and various prepared baits throughout the river.

Iowa River (Johnson County): Catfishing has been good to fair below the Coralville Reservoir and throughout the river.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry counties): Big swings in the temperatures and rainfall has slowed cat fishing down. It is mulberry season and catfish love mulberries. Look for them down stream or under any overhanging mulberry trees.

Cedar River (Benton, Linn and Cedar counties): Catfishing has been good throughout the river.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

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