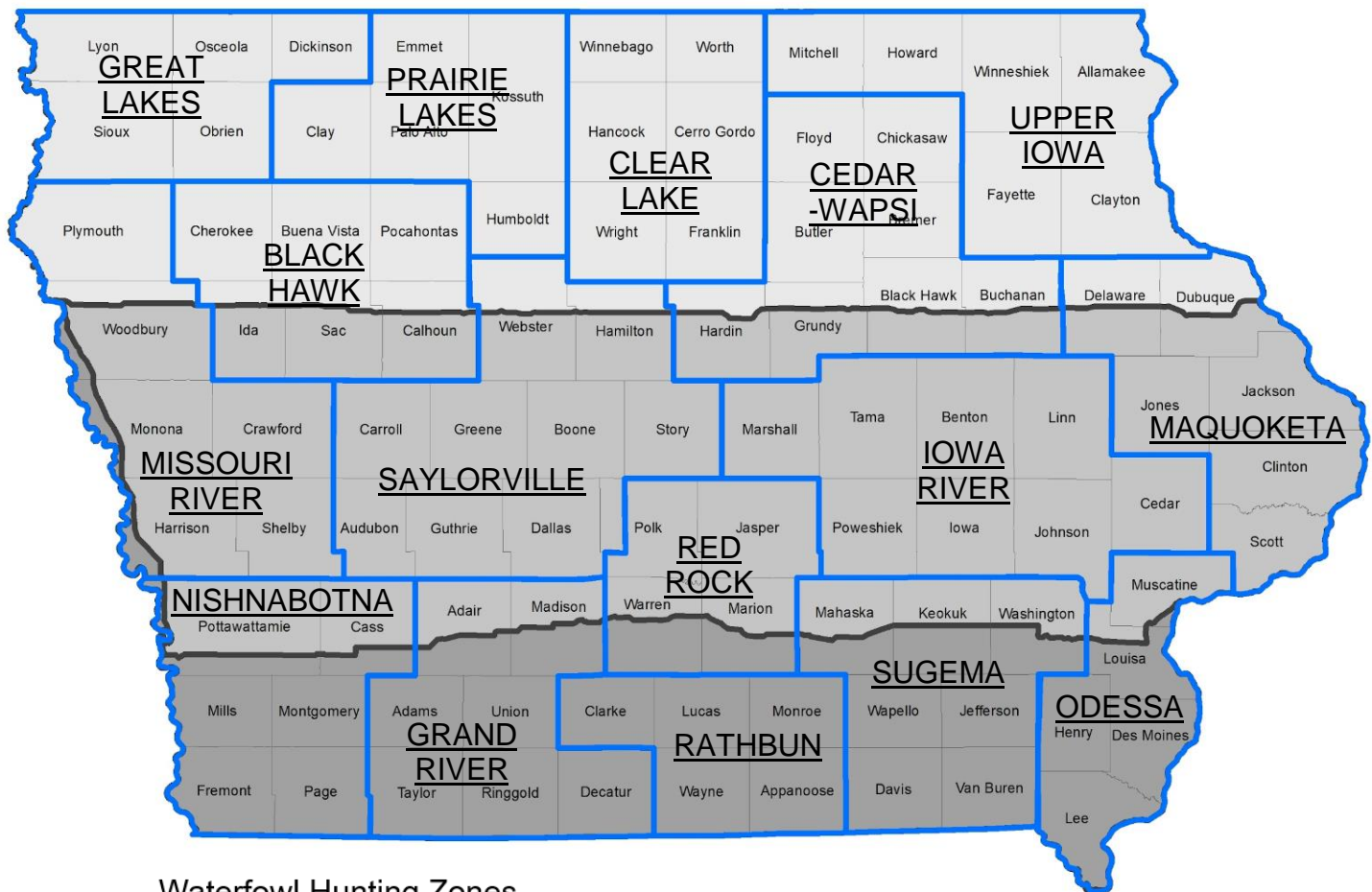


Wetland Habitat Conditions – Fall 2023

Upper Iowa Unit Areas Updated 10/26/23



Waterfowl Hunting Zones

North
 Central
 South
 DNR Wildlife Units

DNR Public Hunting Atlas:

<https://iowadnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f9161b90cddb4fcfb35a96901882a4b7/>

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 pondweed, curly leaf 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.
- 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.

BLACK HAWK WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Clint Maddix

Date Updated: 10/02/2023

BUENA VISTA COUNTY

Little Storm Lake

Water Level: Approximately 12 to 14 inches below crest.

Vegetation: Heavy emergent vegetation.

Notes: Boat launching may be difficult as there is a thick perimeter of emergent vegetation and shallow water.

Storm Lake

Water Level: Approximately 12 to 14 inches below crest.

Vegetation: Little to no vegetation present.

Notes:

CALHOUN COUNTY

South Twin Lake

Water Level: Almost dry, a few inches of water remain covering roughly 5 acres.

Vegetation: Exposed mudflats around the lake have a good stand of emergent vegetation.

Notes: Boat ramp is not usable due to very low water conditions.

CARROLL COUNTY

Artesian Lake

Water Level: At crest elevation.

Vegetation: Some emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes: The wetland has more open water than previous years.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Little Clear Lake

- Water Level: Approximately 20 inches below crest.
- Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation
- Notes: Boat ramps are usable for small boats.

Lizard Lake

- Water Level: Approximately 32 inches below crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation.
- Notes: Water levels are low due to consecutive years of below average precipitation. The main boat ramp should be usable, pre-scouting recommended.

Shimon Marsh

- Water Level: 10 inches below crest.
- Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is extremely dense across the entire basin.
- Notes: By law Shimon Marsh is only accessible to non-motorized vessels.

Sunken Grove

- Water Level: Approximately 14 inches below crest.
- Vegetation: South basin is heavy with emergent vegetation, North basin with decent emergent and submergent vegetation across basin.
- Notes: The North basin is accessible by boat, the South basin is not.

SAC COUNTY

Black Hawk Wildlife Area

- Water Level: State Marsh and DU Marsh are 100% dry. The Inlet of Black Hawk Lake is 19 inches below crest elevation. Smaller wetlands are dry.
- Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is abundant in all basins.
- Notes:

Black Hawk Lake

- Water Level: Approximately 10 inches below crest elevation.

Vegetation: Vegetation is minimal throughout the main lake basin.

Notes: All boat ramps are accessible.

Burrow's Pond

Water Level: Main wetland is 20 inches low, minimal huntable areas available. Smaller wetlands on the area are dry.

Vegetation: Vegetation is dense, there are some pockets of open water.

Notes: The gravel boat ramp is not usable.

Kiowa Marsh

Water Level: Water levels on the larger marshes vary from 12 to 18 inches below crest elevation. Smaller wetlands on the area are dry.

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation, vegetation varies between basins.

Notes: Pools throughout the Kiowa Complex have variable water levels. Pre-scouting is highly recommended. Boat launching will be difficult due to low water levels and vegetation.

Sac City Wetland Complex

Water Level: All basins are dry.

Vegetation: Dense.

Notes:

Tomahawk Marsh

Water Level: Approximately 18 inches low, water levels vary across basins.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is dense but varies by basin.

Notes:

CEDAR-WAPSI WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologists: Jason Auel and Justin Clark

Date Updated: 9/28/2023

BREMER COUNTY

Leopold Area

Water Level: Very little water to completely dry

Vegetation: All dense emergent vegetation

Notes: Without significant rainfall the water levels will remain low to dry. Scouting before hunting is recommended.

Sweet Marsh

Water Level: A Cell: 2 feet below crest.
Martins: Dry
C Cell: 1.5-2 feet below crest. This is typical for this time of year.
Reservoir: Near crest

Vegetation: Lots of emergent vegetation

Notes: The project on Martins Lake was never completed last fall due to unforeseen circumstances. The new contractor is expected to complete the majority of the dirt work this fall. The water in A Cell will be low until Martins dirt work is completed. The reservoir is near crest but water in Plum Creek is still low so we do not have enough to fill the other cells and reservoir at the same time. C cell will be accessible by small boats and mud motors. Scouting is recommended prior to hunting.

BUTLER COUNTY

Big Marsh

Water Level: Big Marsh proper is dry. Most shallow wetlands on the complex are dry

Vegetation: Vegetation is dense throughout

Notes: No water, recommend scouting as wetland conditions can improve quickly with rainfall.

CLEAR LAKE WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: TJ Herrick

Date Updated: 09/28/2023

CERRO GORDO COUNTY

Union Hills

Water Level: Main basin water level is a little low but still boatable. The smaller wetlands vary, but generally low or dry.

Vegetation: Good emergent vegetation

Notes:

Ventura Marsh

Water Level: 1.6 ft below crest

Vegetation: good interspersed of emergent and submersed vegetation

Notes:

HANCOCK COUNTY

Crystal Hills WMA

Water Level: The water in the large wetland is low. Mudflats ranging from 10 - 30 feet wide ring the wetland. Water is low in the small wetlands in this area.

Vegetation: Submergent vegetation comes to the surface across most of the pond

Notes:

Gladfelter WMA

Water Level: Water levels vary from wetland to wetland, but most wetlands appear to be 6-8 inches low. Most ponds have some water

Vegetation:

Notes: Walk-in opportunities available

Eagle Lake

Water Level: 0.5 ft inches below crest

Vegetation: Some submersed vegetation throughout, cattail perimeter

Notes: The main part of lake is accessible for boats

East Twin Lake WMA

Water Level: Able to launch a boat; especially small boats

Vegetation: A mix of emergent and submergent vegetation exists

Notes:

Meredith Marsh

Water Level: Low or dry

Vegetation:

Notes:

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Harmon Lake

Water Level: The east pool is so densely vegetated that no water is visible, if there is any in the center. The center pool water level is 4.9 on the gauge, while the logs are at 5.5, making it a little over 6 inches lower than normal fall crest. There is a small mud beaver dam that is blocking the water from reaching the structure. Boat access will be difficult due to the thick vegetation. The west pool also appears to be 6-7 inches below normal crest level, but is accessible by canoe or small boat.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Myre Slough

Water Level: The water level is 0.4 below the gauge

Vegetation: There is good interspersion of vegetation with the water but the channel to the main part of the slough is heavily vegetated, making boat access difficult.

Notes:

WORTH COUNTY

Elk Creek

Wetland basins outside the main impoundments are 20 - 50% filled with 1 - 3 inches of water

Elk Creek-Pool A

Water Level: Water level was 2 feet below normal fall crest.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Elk Creek-Pool B

Water Level: Water level is now up to 4.6 on the water control structure gauge. Normal fall crest level is 5.6

Vegetation: The annual wetland vegetation that grew in Pool B looks fairly robust, but the smartweed has not matured and the water currently does not flood any of this vegetation.

Notes:

Elk Creek-Pool C

Water Level: The stoplogs are at normal fall crest and the water level is at that to an inch above at this time

Vegetation: There is good interspersions of arrowhead, soft-stem bullrush and rice cutgrass with the water, creating good waterfowl habitat.

Notes:

Rice Lake

Water Level: Water level is about 8 inches below crest.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Hanlontown Slough

Water Level: Water levels in most wetlands appeared to be about 8 - 9 inches below normal crest.

Vegetation: A few wetlands had 5-10 foot wide mudflats around the edges, but most had water to the edge of the emergent vegetation.

Notes:

Silver Lake and Marsh

Water Level: Lake water level is about 8 - 9 inches below normal crest.
The marsh is dry

Vegetation:

Notes:

WRIGHT COUNTY

Big Wall Lake

Water Level: Nearly 3ft below crest

Vegetation: With the current drought conditions, wild rice continues to be very abundant across the entire lake.

Notes: Boat access is very limited

Elm Lake

Water Level: very low

Vegetation:

Notes: boat access is very limited

Lower Morse Lake Wetland Complex

Water Level: Morse Lake is roughly 5ft low but still usable for walk-in hunting.

Vegetation:

Notes:

GRAND RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Chad Paup

Date Updated: 10/10/2023

ADAMS COUNTY

Lake Icaria

Water Level: Low, this is a walk in area only.

Vegetation OK, we did not drawdown the water this year.

Notes:

UNION COUNTY

12 Mile Lake Wetland

Water Level: Low, this is a walk in area.

Vegetation: OK, we did not draw it down this year.

Notes:

Mitchell Marsh

Water Level: Full,

Vegetation: Very good

Notes:

GREAT LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Chris LaRue

Date Updated: 09/22/2023

DICKINSON COUNTY

Christopherson Slough

Water Level: The main slough is below crest level due to continued drought conditions.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is good.

Notes: The main slough can be accessed by large and small boats. Most large wetlands have some good water for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Diamond Lake

Water Level: The lake is about 10 inches below crest level due to dry conditions

Vegetation: Vegetation is excellent

Notes: Only a couple of the larger marshes still have water for walk-in hunting. All other small wetland are dry at this time. Diamond Lake can be accessed by large or small boats.

Dugout Creek

Water Level: The main marsh is +/- 10 inches below crest level due to drought conditions. A drawdown was conducted this summer to enhance vegetation and to remove carp.

Vegetation: Excellent Habitat Conditions

Notes: Scouting is recommended as most of the wetlands are dry at this time. Dugout Creek Marsh can be accessed by large and small boats but exercise caution outside the main channel due to the lack of recent rains.

Garlock Slough

Water Level: Garlock slough is about 12 inches below crest level

Vegetation: Vegetation is fair to good

Notes: Garlock is only accessible by canoe, kayak, or walk-in hunting. Some of the larger wetlands in the complex have hunttable water for good walk-in hunting opportunities.

Grovers Lake

Water Level: Grovers Lake is +/- 15 inches below crest level at this time due to the very dry conditions once again.

Vegetation: Vegetation is very good but accessing any small pockets may be difficult

Notes: Grovers Lake is accessible by boat but it may be difficult without a mud motor.

Hales Slough

Water Level: Hales Slough is 10 inches below crest level and same elevation as Big Spirit

Lake.

Vegetation: Good to Excellent

Notes: Hales is accessible by boat and smaller mud motors

Horseshoe Lake WMA

Water Level: Water level is +/- 15 inches below crest level

Vegetation: Good

Notes: Boat access may be difficult without a mud motor. Walk-in hunting is an opportunity here too.

Jemmerson Slough **Waterfowl Refuge**

Water Level: The three main marshes in the **waterfowl refuge** are +/- 15 inches below crest level. These conditions will make it very appealing for holding waterfowl within the area.

Vegetation: Good to excellent

Notes: **The Jemmerson Slough Wetlands Complex is about +/- 1,100 acres in size. Please note that 665 acres are in the designated Waterfowl Refuge that was established in 2009. The refuge is **CLOSED** to all public access during the duck season.**

Kattleson-Hogsback Complex

Water Level: West Hottes is +/- 1 foot below crest level

Vegetation: Excellent

Notes: West Hottes is accessible by large and small boats and motors. Some of the larger wetlands in the complex may have water for walk-in hunting however, all small marshes are dry at this time. Scouting is recommended.

Little Swan Lake

Water Level: Little Swan Lake is about +/- 8 inches below crest level

Vegetation: Excellent habitat conditions !

Notes: Some larger marshes may have water for walk-in hunting opportunities. Scouting is recommended.

Sidel Marsh

Water Level: The main marsh is +/-10 inches below crest level.

Vegetation: Excellent

Notes: The extended drought conditions has allowed giant cattail to seriously take over majority of the marsh making hunting difficult until things open back up to some degree.

Spring Run

Water Level: Some larger marshes in the complex have adequate water for hunting. However, many other large and small wetlands are once again dry due to the drought conditions.

Vegetation: Very good in majority of the complex

Notes: Lily Lake is virtually dry once again after the dry conditions persisted. It was within 6 inches of crest early this year and the boards have been in and at crest level for over 3 years now.

Pleasant lake and Prairie Lake are about 1 foot below crest level but have good water for large and small boat access. Spring Lake is about 1 foot below crest level but still accessible by small boats and mud motors on the main pool.

With scouting you can find some good larger wetlands with water which will make for good hunting opportunities.

Welch Lake Complex

Water Level: Welch Lake is about 1 foot below crest level

Vegetation: Very good to excellent

Notes: Many of the larger wetlands in the Welch lake Complex have good water for excellent walk-in hunting opportunities. Most all other small wetland are dry at this time.

Yager Slough

Water Level: The main slough is about +/- 15 inches below crest level. Walk-in hunting is possible but boat access is not possible

Vegetation: Good to Excellent due to the continued dry conditions

Notes: A couple of the larger marshes in the complex may have water for walk-in hunting. Scouting is recommended

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Rush Lake

Water Level: Rush Lake is about +/- 15 inches below crest level and not accessible by boat due to the very dry conditions and an issue at the WCS. Walk-in hunting is possible.

Vegetation: Fair to good vegetation on some portions of the slough

Notes: Rush is NOT accessible by small boats and mud motors due to the very dry conditions. Walk-in hunting is recommended at this time. Hopefully we get some rain to bring the pool elevation up.

IOWA RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Steve Woodruff

Date Updated: 10/10/2023

BENTON COUNTY

Dudgeon Lake

Water Level: very low

Vegetation: good

Notes: drought conditions causing low water levels

JOHNSON COUNTY

Hawkeye Wildlife Area

Water Level: 682.50. Water levels continue to drop. Very low water inputs from upstream. Very difficult to maintain water levels at Coralville Reservoir Dam.

Vegetation: excellent

Notes: Babcock boat access is closed due to very low water levels and is impassable in both directions.

Swan Lake

Water Level: dry

Vegetation: vegetation along the perimeter of the wetland

Notes:

TAMA COUNTY

Otter Creek

Water Level: Dry. Small pool of water in segment 6

Vegetation: excellent

Notes:

MAQUOKETA WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Curt Kemmerer

Date Updated: 10/2/2023

CLINTON COUNTY

Goose Lake

Water Level: North Pool: Dry. There was no artificial drawdown this year; the marsh was left full this spring and has naturally dried up over the summer.
Center Pool: Very low. There was no artificial drawdown this year; the marsh was left full this spring and has naturally dried up over the summer.
South Pool: Dry. This pool has been drawn down to allow for construction of a new boat access and a new water control structure. Even if rains return, this pool will be low this fall.

Vegetation: Thick vegetation across all pools.

Notes: It is unlikely that there will be much boat hunting opportunity here this fall with drought conditions.

JACKSON COUNTY

Green Island

Water Level: West Side: At normal level for early split of the regular season.
East Side: We've gained a little water since teal season. Some boats are making it down the 5th ditch until a log jam before the backwater lakes.

Vegetation: The low water has spurred good, thick vegetative growth across the marsh. As water levels rise, we will be looking good. Lots of natural food and planted crops in the refuge.

Notes: We are pumping the high side of the marsh and the refuge. The spring flood breached the main levee near the midpoint of Blake's Lake. We are not able to fix the breach this year, so we are still open to the River. The 4th ditch dike took a real beating as well. The NO WAKE zones in the 4th and 5th ditch will be strictly enforced.

JONES COUNTY

Muskrat Slough

Water Level: Dry. There was no artificial drawdown this year; the marsh was left full this spring and has naturally dried up over the summer.

Vegetation: Typical cattail fringe with mudflat that is greening up across the middle. Some of our work to reduce cattail and create more duck food on the west side has been successful.

Notes: It looks like there won't be much hunting opportunity here this season if dry weather continues.

SCOTT COUNTY

Princeton

Water Level: We are nearing crest water level on the public hunting half of the marsh.

Vegetation: The lotus hasn't died back yet and is still very thick. Arrowhead has died back. Plenty of thick wild rice and bulrush.

Notes: We have been pumping the area as usual this fall. The marsh has boatable water. The dry conditions have allowed us to get into the refuge and do a lot of work and food plots. Our main goal will be to flood the best duck habitat in the refuge this fall.

MISSOURI RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Doug Chafa

Date Updated: 08/23/2023

HARRISON COUNTY

Round Lake

Water Level: Empty

Vegetation: Lots of river bullrush for when the water comes back.

Notes:

Nobles Lake

Water Level: Almost entirely dried up.

Vegetation:

Notes:

MONONA COUNTY

Badger Lake

Water Level: Dried up

Vegetation: 100% veg coverage. Moist soil plants & annual weeds.

Notes:

Blue Lake

Water Level: NW, SW, & SE Blue Lake - Dry

Vegetation: 100% veg coverage. Moist soil plants & annual weeds.

Notes:

Louisville Bend

Water Level: South end very low. No supplemental water again this year.

Vegetation:

Notes: Pump damaged during 2019 flood.

Tieville Bend

Water Level: 3 ft below crest.

Vegetation: Good smartweed, millets, & bidens.

Notes: Pump started 08/15/23. Pump down to be fixed Thursday 8/24/23.

WOODBURY COUNTY

Browns Lake

Water Level: Water levels 2 ft low, west side of oxbow dried up.
Vegetation: Emergent veg around the interior oxbow perimeter.
Notes: Supplemental water is coming in from MEC.

Luton WMA

Water Level: All of the shallow excavations have dried up.
Vegetation:
Notes:

Snyder Bend WMA

Water Level: Water is one foot below crest. Supplemental water coming from MEC plant.
Vegetation: Open water with no vegetation.
Notes:

Table Marsh WMA

Water Level: Shallow wetlands have all dried up.
Vegetation:
Notes:



NISHNABOTNA WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Matt Dollison

Date Updated: 10/10/2023

FREMONT COUNTY

Riverton-Main Area

Water Level: Dry
Vegetation: Large amount of annual wetland veg present, should be very attractive when flooded.

Notes: West Nishnabotna River is too dry to be able to pump.

Riverton-Jensen Tract

Water Level: 6 inches below full pool.

Vegetation: Large amount of annual wetland veg present, will be very attractive when flooded.

Notes: East Nishnabotna River currently too dry to be able to top off the marsh.

Forney Lake

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation: Many annuals present, but dominated by maretail which doesn't have much food value and is an upland species.

Notes:

Copeland Bend

Water Level: Water in the borrow pits and deepest portions of excavations only.

Vegetation: No vegetation in the water. If flooded, will be excellent habitat.

Notes:

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

Water Level: Water in deepest portions of excavations only.

Vegetation: No vegetation in the water. If flooded, will be excellent habitat.

Notes:

Cooper Creek

Water Level: Middle cell borrow ditch has water.

Vegetation: Water has no vegetation.

Notes:

Auldon Bar

Water Level: Dry except deep scour holes.

Vegetation: If flooding occurs it will result in flooded cropland and valuable annuals.

Notes:

Botna Bottoms

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation: Valuable annuals are present if flooded.

Notes:

Draper Bottoms

Water Level: The only water is in the southeast borrow pit and northeast corner borrow area.

Vegetation: Dikes will be mowed prior to Sept. 1.

Notes:

Percival I-29

Water Level: Only water in the borrow pit.

Vegetation: Excellent vegetation exists in the newly excavated wetlands. If they are flooded they should be attractive to ducks.

Notes:

MILLS COUNTY

Willow Slough

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation: Excellent annual vegetation present throughout the entire basin. Will be very attractive if flooded.

Notes:

Haynie Slough

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation: Cattails have died back due to dry conditions. This should provide more food for ducks and make the marsh more attractive if the area is flooded.

Notes:

Noddleman Island

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation: Good annual vegetation present. Will be desirable if flooded.

Notes:

St. Mary's Island

Water Level: Dry.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Keg Creek I-29

Water Level: Very low.

Vegetation: The historically low water level has allowed valuable vegetation to grow in all the shallower portions of the pool. This is providing cover for hunters adjacent to the existing water. If the water level comes up, it will flood this vegetation and make excellent duck habitat that will provide way better hunting opportunity than is typical.

Notes:

ODESSA WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Andy Robbins

Date Updated: 10/11/2023

DES MOINES COUNTY

Blackhawk Bottoms

Water Level: Below normal in Patterson Lake and Round pond.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation in Patterson Lake and Round Pond.

Notes: Stoplogs have been installed in the impoundment on Spring Creek (north of Patterson Lake). The water level is currently very low and significant rainfall is needed to raise the level.

LOUISA COUNTY

Cone Marsh

Water Level: 10+ inches below crest due to drought conditions.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the area.

Notes:

Klum Lake

Water Level: Pumping had just been completed and the water level is near normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the area.

Notes: Aerial spraying was conducted again this fall to control dense stands of cattail.

Odessa Wildlife Area

Water Level: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=dvn&gage=odsi4>
The water level is slowly being raised and will progress throughout the season.

Vegetation: Thick stands of moist-soil vegetation are found throughout the area as a result of the water level drawdown. The vegetation is very diverse this year.

Notes: In spite of this spring's major flood on the Mississippi River, good habitat conditions are present as a result of the drawdown. Flood waters receded quickly providing plenty of time for moist-soil plant development. There has also been some decent regrowth of buttonbush, which has been very stressed since the 2018 & 2019 flood. Flood waters did prevent the planting of corn in the Toolesboro impoundment this year.

MUSCATINE COUNTY

Wiese Slough

Water Level: Approximately 1.5+ feet below normal crest due to drought conditions. Significant rainfall is needed to raise the water level.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the area.

Notes:

PRAIRIE LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Rob Patterson

Date Updated: 08/25/2023

CLAY COUNTY

Elk Lake

Water Level: Elk Lake- Near or slightly below normal pool.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the lake

Notes: Habitat conditions very good at Elk Lake

Barringer Slough

Water Level: Near or slightly below normal pool

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the marsh

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good at Barringer Slough

Dan Greene Slough

Water Level: Near or slightly below normal pool

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the marsh

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good at Dan Greene Slough

DU Marsh

Water Level: Below normal pool- Approx 1 ft low

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the marsh

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good at DU Marsh

Trumbull Lake-Smith Slough Complex

Water Level: Trumbull Lake- Slightly below normal pool
Smith Slough- Water levels are being held as low as possible to facilitate

management objectives

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout all water bodies within the complex

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good at Trumbull Lake

EMMET COUNTY

Cheever Lake

Water Level: Approx ½ foot below pool

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the lake

Notes: Floating cattails have partially blocked the boat access. Accessing the lake with large boats will be very challenging.

Four-Mile Lake Complex

Water Level: Near or slightly below normal pool

Vegetation:

Notes:

Ingham High Complex

Water Level: Near or slightly below pool over much of the complex. Water levels in East Slough, Snipe Meadow and West Swan Lake are being managed well below full pool as part of the lake renovation project at West Swan Lake.

Vegetation: Larger lakes and marshes (Ingham, High and Cunningham) have very little vegetation. Smaller marshes and wetlands around the complex have abundant emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes: Habitat conditions vary across the complex. Smaller marshes and wetlands offer very good habitat conditions.

Iowa Lake and Iowa Lake Marsh Complex

Water Level: Near or slightly below pool.

Vegetation: Iowa Lake- very little aquatic vegetation. Many smaller water bodies throughout the complex have abundant aquatic plants.

Notes: Habitat conditions vary across the complex. Smaller marshes and wetlands offer very good habitat conditions.

Tuttle Lake Complex

Water Level: Near or slightly below pool

Vegetation: Tuttle Lake- very little aquatic vegetation. Many smaller water bodies throughout the complex have abundant aquatic plants.

Notes: Habitat conditions vary across the complex. Smaller marshes and wetlands offer very good habitat conditions.

KOSSUTH COUNTY

Goose Lake Complex

Water Level: Near or slightly below pool

Vegetation: Goose Lake and associated wetlands have abundant emergent and submergent vegetation

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good throughout the Goose Lake complex

PALO ALTO COUNTY

Blue-Wing Marsh

Water Level: Blue Wing Marsh- Near or slightly below normal pool. Smaller wetlands well below full pool.

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation in all water bodies throughout the complex

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good throughout the Blue-wing marsh complex

Dewey's Pasture Complex

Water Level: Larger marshes are near or slightly below normal pool- Most smaller wetlands throughout the complex have some water but are below normal pool

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetations in all water bodies across the complex.

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good across the complex

Fallow Marsh

Water Level: Water levels are well below full pool

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good

Rush Lake

Water Level: Near or slightly below normal pool

Vegetation: Abundant emergent vegetation

Notes: Habitat conditions are very good.

RATHBUN WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Heath Van Waus

Date Updated: 10/10/2023

APPANOOSE COUNTY

Rathbun Lake Complex

Water Level: Rathbun Lake elevation currently sits at 903, which is two feet low of the Summer elevation. Rathbun Lake has dropped a foot from teal opener. All upper impoundments on the North & South fork are dry.

Vegetation: Vegetation in the upper impoundments is excellent. Significant rainfall will be needed for hunting opportunities. No flooded vegetation is present on the reservoir.

Notes:

Sedan Bottoms

Water Level: Predominantly dry. Some deeper cuts or borrow areas are holding some shallow water but the remaining wetlands are dry.

Vegetation: Good - Significant rainfall will be needed for hunting opportunities.

Notes:



RED ROCK WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Todd Gosselink

Date Updated: 10/4/2023

JASPER & POLK COUNTIES

Colfax WMA and Chichaqua Bottoms Green Belt WMA

Water Level:

Dry conditions have substantially reduced water levels in ponds, oxbows and marshes, with the Skunk River at extremely low conditions. The river levels impact the oxbows in the floodplain, and will remain low if river levels remain low.

Vegetation:

Vegetation in most areas is very good, but most of these areas with vegetation are dry. If we get some fall rains, flooded vegetation conditions will be excellent.

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 is extremely low due to drought conditions.

Rock Creek Marsh

Water Level:

The water level is determined by the elevation of Rock Creek Lake, which is currently below normal pool.

Vegetation:

There has been extremely heavy sedimentation the last few years resulting in reduced water surface area. The main marsh has some open water conditions, but dense willows and arrowhead plants fill much of the marsh. Some of the basins that have been isolated by sedimentation have good stands of emergent vegetation, primarily arrowhead.

Notes:
Good for walk-in access.

MARION COUNTY

Red Rock Reservoir

Water Level:

Lake Red Rock pool was at 741.6 on Oct. 4. The USACE has the minimum outflow allowed since Sept. 1st. Due to the drought, less water is flowing in than going out of the lake. Current drought conditions may make a fall pool rise difficult this year. Hopefully, we will receive fall rains upstream to allow for a fall pool rise. If river flows allow for this, the DNR has requested that the USACE raise the lake pool to 744 by Oct 9, 745 by Oct 25, and 746 by Nov 15. Due to the potential for fluctuating lake levels, it is crucial to monitor the lake water level and river flows at the USACE web site:

<http://rivergages.mvr.usace.army.mil/WaterControl/Districts/MVR/Forecast/pdf/forecast.html>

Vegetation:

The vegetation and potential food for migrating waterfowl is excellent headed into the fall, since minimal flooding this year, which allowed for plenty of time for good vegetation growth. Large stands of wild millet (barnyard grass), Bidens (Spanish needles), and smartweed cover the areas that could be flooded this fall if drought conditions lessen.

Boat Access:

The boat ramp at "OK Hill" is not accessible with drought conditions. The "Box Cars" and Bennington boat ramps are accessible. Box Cars boat ramp is best suited for surface drive conditions due to low water levels, but extremely difficult even with these motors.

Notes:

The new USACE water regulations allow Red Rock lake levels to be raised 5 feet instead of the typical 2 feet every year. This will flood approximately an additional 1000 acres of waterfowl habitat.

Swan Refuge

Water Level:

Pumping at the refuge is currently not possible due to the extremely low levels of the Des Moines River. If we get rains and the river flows increase enough to allow pumping, pumping may begin if not too late in the season. It takes a minimum of 3 weeks of pumping to create decent waterfowl habitat in the Swan refuge.

Vegetation: There are excellent natural moist soil plants in the refuge, since there was minimal spring flooding giving enough time for vegetation to grow and produce seed for migrating waterfowl.

Notes: This is a Waterfowl Refuge. Access is restricted from 1 September until the end of the duck hunting season.

WARREN COUNTY

Banner Flats WMA

Water Level: The wetlands in this area are oxbows or constructed basins and currently are nearly empty due to the drought. The large constructed wetland by the shooting range has been drained to allow construction work on the marsh this fall to repair the dikes. Other wetland water levels will vary depending upon the weather and the proximity of the wetland to the Middle River channel, which is currently very low.

Vegetation: Excellent stands of moist soil and emergent plants have developed this year with the lack of flooding, but are currently dry.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

Red Rock WMA

Water Level: There are numerous oxbows and constructed wetlands in this area. Most wetlands are currently low due to dry conditions, but still have some water in them.

Vegetation: Excellent stands of moist soil and emergent plants have developed this year with the lack of flooding, but are mostly dry.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

Red Rock WMA Sub-impoundments

Water Level: Little Hartford wetland has minimal water due to very low river levels and dry conditions. Pumping has occurred at Big Hartford (Richard's Marsh) since mid September and should have enough water to be boatable by the first duck opener weekend. Pumping is planned to continue as needed throughout the fall to maintain the water level to provide waterfowl habitat and hunting opportunities.

Vegetation: There is excellent moist soil plant growth in Big and Little Hartford since there was minimal flooding this past year. No agricultural crops were planted this spring.

Notes: Little Hartford boat ramp is unusable since there is no water. Big Hartford boat ramp is usable due to pumping.

Runnells Marsh

Water Level: The Runnells Marsh (directly south of the town of Runnells) is currently very low due to the dry conditions. All of the Mud creek flow has been diverted into the marsh since the beginning of July, but flows are minimal at this time. Rain will be needed to increase the marsh water levels. The deeper pools have water currently, but minimal vegetation is flooded.

Vegetation: There is excellent moist soil plant growth throughout all of Runnells Marsh since it did not flood at this level this spring, and minimal water in the vegetation.

Notes: The boat ramps are not currently usable due to low lake levels, but as the marsh fills, access will be good. This marsh is an excellent walk-in site also, with access from HWY 316 and the boat ramp. The southwest portion of the marsh can be accessed by crossing the dike and water control outflow structure on the south side of the marsh.

SAYLORVILLE WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Josh Gansen

Date Updated: 10/2/2023

GREENE COUNTY

Dunbar Slough WMA

Water Level: 18 inches low

Vegetation: Nice stands of emergent vegetation across the basin.

Notes:

Dunbar Slough WPA

Water Level: Dry

Vegetation: Thick stand of annuals and perennial wetland vegetation

Notes: Limited spring runoff and drought conditions, major rain events will be required to provide fall hunting

Goose Lake WMA

Water Level: Low

Vegetation: Heavy submergent vegetation in the main basin

Notes: Limited spring runoff and drought conditions

Snake Creek WMA

Water Level: 10 inches below crest

Vegetation: Heavy stands of Emergent Vegetation are present

Notes: Walk in Access

GUTHRIE COUNTY

Bays Branch WMA

Water Level: 18 inches below crest,

Vegetation: Good stands of perennial vegetation

Notes: Small boats are accessing the area

Lakin Slough

Water Level: 6 inches below crest

Vegetation: Good stands of perennial vegetation and submergents

Notes: Small boats are accessing the area

McCord Pond

Water Level: Small boats are accessing the area

Vegetation: Good stands of perennial vegetation, Lotus is covering most open water

Notes:

POLK COUNTY

Saylorville Reservoir

Water Level: Currently 835.05 and dropping 1

Vegetation: Nice stands of moist soil plants

Notes:

STORY COUNTY

Hendrickson Marsh

Water Level: Crest

Vegetation: Nice stands of emergent vegetation and submergents

Notes: Localized heavy rain events in the watershed

SUGEMA WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Jeff Glaw

Date Updated: 10/10/2023

KEOKUK COUNTY

Hayesville Bend WMA

Water Level: Dry due to drought conditions

Vegetation: Sparse vegetation due to drought conditions

Notes: Need rain to fill up wetland

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Lake Sugema

Water Level: Down 3 feet

Vegetation: Sparse vegetation due to drought

Notes: Need timely rain

DeVoss/Foster WMA

Water Level: Dry to drought conditions

Vegetation: Good variety of vegetation

Notes: Need timely rain to fill wetland

Fox River WMA

Water Level: Low water due to drought conditions

Vegetation: Decent variety of vegetation just needs water

Notes:

UPPER IOWA WILDLIFE UNIT

Wildlife Biologist: Troy Anderson

Date Updated: 10/26/2023

ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

Mississippi River-Pool 9

Water Level: The Mississippi River is slightly above “normal summer pool” and it is projected to significantly rise with the recent heavy rain events.

Vegetation: There is a good amount of emergent and submergent vegetation due to the relatively consistent water levels this summer. The wild rice seems to have really become more abundant over the last couple of years.

Notes: River levels can change very quickly with heavy rains, pre scouting is recommended

CLAYTON COUNTY

Mississippi River-Pool 10

Water Level: The Mississippi River is slightly above “normal summer pool” and it is projected to rise significantly with the recent heavy rain events.

Vegetation: There is a good amount of emergent and submergent vegetation due to the relatively consistent water levels this summer. The wild rice seems to have really become more abundant over the last couple of years.

Notes: River levels can change very quickly with heavy rains, pre scouting is recommended

WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Cardinal Marsh-Main Marsh

Water Level: Due to the recent heavy rain events, the water level has increased to “hunnable” in the main marsh. Boat launch is not recommended for outboards but a surface drive or mud motor may be able to navigate through the marsh (Pre-scouting recommended). There is also walk-in access around the main marsh.

Vegetation: The main marsh has a good mixture of emergent and submerged vegetation. The cattails around the edge of the main marsh and a few pockets throughout the marsh regenerated again this year creating several places to hide a boat. The abundance of submergent vegetation may create some issues with standard outboard motor navigation. The recent rain has covered

the exposed mudflats with open water, although shallow.

Notes: Pre-scouting is recommended. Be cautious of knee-deep mud around the open water.

Cardinal Marsh-Segments

Water Level: Segments A, B, and C are slightly below normal fall levels but have plenty of huntable water in them. Segment D was drawn down and due to the extremely dry late summer conditions, hasn't been able to be filled to a huntable level.

Vegetation: Segments A, B, and C have good emergent and submergent vegetation and the recent rain has covered the exposed mudflats with very shallow open water. Segment D is full of vegetation but has very little open water due to the dry summer conditions.

Notes: The segments are walk-in access only and pre-scouting is recommended. Be cautious of knee-deep mud around the edges of the open water.