

Wetland Habitat Conditions – Fall 2020

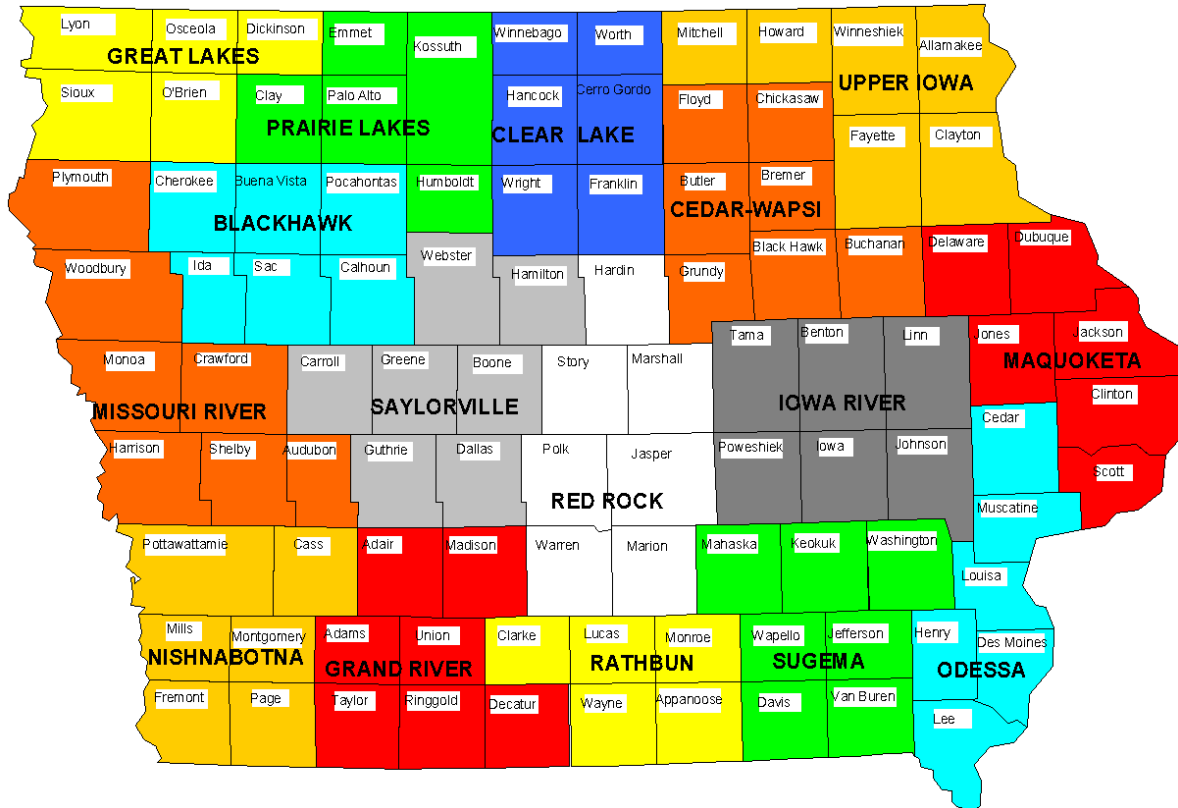
(Some Reports Updated Oct. 15, 2020)

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.
- 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: 9/24/2020

BUENA VISTA COUNTY

Little Storm Lake

Water levels: Currently approximately 2 feet below crest.

Vegetation: Heavy emergent vegetation.

Notes: Currently, launching boats would be extremely difficult due to water levels .

Storm Lake

Water levels: Levels are currently 6 inches below crest.

Vegetation: The lake saw an influx of emergent vegetation growth this year. Little to no emergent vegetation.

Notes: Boat ramps are still accessible.

CALHOUN COUNTY

South Twin Lake

Water levels: Levels are approximately 1 to 1.5 feet low.

Vegetation: Some emergent vegetation, most in the north portion of the lake which is a refuge.

Notes: Boat access is currently limited as launching boats may be difficult due to low water levels. Three buoys currently make the refuge line.

CARROLL COUNTY

Artesian Lake

Water levels: Levels are well below crest and will maintain that level due to the water level control structure replacement.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is dense. There may be some walk in opportunities in the deeper pools.

Notes: Area not accessible to boats this fall.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Little Clear Lake

Water levels: Lake is below crest due to drought conditions.

Vegetation: Area still has a ring of emergent vegetation. Submergent vegetation is extremely dense.

Notes: Lake is accessible via boat from ramps located on the East and West side.

Lizard Lake

Water levels: Currently 6 inches to 1 foot below crest due to drought.

Vegetation: Lake still has quite a bit emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes: Main boat ramp on the East side is still accessible to all boats.

Shimon Marsh

Water levels: Main wetland and surrounding small wetlands are currently dry.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is dense in the main wetland.

Notes: Ramp on South side is unusable due to lack of water. Area is restricted to non-motorized vessels.

Sunken Grove

Water levels: Area is 1.5 to 2 feet below crest.

Vegetation: Area has some vegetation, both submergent and emergent.

Notes: Main boat ramp may still be accessible to smaller boats. Southeast lobe of main wetland is dry.

SAC COUNTY

Black Hawk Wildlife Area

Water levels: Water levels are highly variable. State Marsh is dry. Other wetlands in the area have little to no huntable water.

Vegetation: Areas have good stands of emergent vegetation.

Notes: Walk in areas have limited huntable water at the moment.

Black Hawk Lake

Water levels: Water level is 6 inches to 1 foot below crest

Vegetation: Lake has small amounts of emergent vegetation.

Notes: Main boat ramps are still accessible.

Burrow's Pond

Water levels: All wetlands are currently dry or have extremely low water levels.

Vegetation: Dense emergent vegetation over all wetlands.

Notes:

Kiowa Marsh

Water levels: Levels vary greatly. Some pools are dry, others have huntable levels of water.

Vegetation: Most areas have fair amounts of emergent vegetation. Some pools have heavy submergent veg.

Notes: Boat access is very limited. May be able to launch a boat on the northernmost pool.

Sac City Wetland Complex

Water levels: Most wetlands are dry. Main wetland still has some huntable water.

Vegetation: All wetlands have heavy emergent vegetation.

Notes:

Tomahawk Marsh

Water levels: Levels are variable, but well below crest due to drought.

Vegetation: Most areas have nice stands of emergent vegetation and fairly dense submergent vegetation.

Notes: Area limited spots accessible to walk in hunting because of low water levels.

CEDAR-WAPSI WILDLIFE UNIT

Jason Auel, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/24/2020

BREMER COUNTY

Leopold Area

Water levels: Crest to 1 foot below crest

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has developed in most wetlands

Notes: The rain 2 weeks ago helped fill the wetlands but more rainfall will be needed to maintain current levels.

Sweet Marsh

Water levels: Martens Lake segment is slightly above crest. A and C pools are 6 inches to 1 foot below crest.

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes: The marsh is being raised slowly as vegetation allows. Current marsh levels are typical for the first opener.

BUTLER COUNTY

Big Marsh

Water levels: Main pools are where they usually are for first opener and will continue to slowly rise through season. Walk-in pools are dry but hope to fill as river allows

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes: The rain two weeks ago helped fill the main pools but the West Fork River is still low. Additional rainfall will be needed throughout the fall to maintain and increase water levels.

CLEAR LAKE WILDLIFE UNIT

TJ Herrick, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 8/25/2020

CERRO GORDO COUNTY

Union Hills

Water levels: Large wetland on west side is 8" below crest, other basins are below crest, with some of the smallest basins nearly dry.

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

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged due to varying water levels in the wetland basins.

Ventura Marsh

Water Level: 6" below crest

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation has continued to decrease in abundance and much of the water > 3 feet deep is wide open. Submergent vegetation is abundant.

Notes: Small “mats” of cattails are floating free and boaters should be aware while crossing the marsh, especially in low light.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Crystal Hills WMA

Water levels: Below crest.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is very limited. Submergent vegetation is present.

Notes:

Gladfelter WMA

Water levels: Below crest on all wetlands

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is present in limited amounts and submergent vegetation is present.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged due to lower water levels.

Eagle Lake

Water Level: 5” below crest

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is present in the lake.

Notes: Small “mats” of cattails are floating free and boaters should be aware while crossing the marsh, especially in low light. These floating “mats” can make access difficult by blocking boat channels.

East Twin Lake WMA

Water Level: Below crest.

Vegetation: Some emergent vegetation, with limited submergent.

Notes:

Meredith Marsh

Water levels: Below crest.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is present

Notes:

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Harmon Lake

Water levels: Below crest

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged due to lower water levels.

Myre Slough

Water level: Near crest

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submergent vegetation

Notes:

WORTH COUNTY

Elk Creek - Pool A

Water level: Below crest

Vegetation: Little vegetation

Notes:

Elk Creek - Pool B

Water level: Near crest

Vegetation: Some emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes:

Elk Creek - Pool C

Water level: Below crest

Vegetation: Some emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes:

Rice Lake

Water Level: Below crest

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is sparse and submergent vegetation is abundant.

Notes:

Hanlontown Slough

Water level: Below crest

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is present, with the submergent being more prevalent.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged due to lower water levels.

Silver Lake and Marsh

Water level: Below crest

Vegetation: Very little emergent vegetation in the lake, and abundant submergent vegetation.

Notes:

WRIGHT COUNTY

Big Wall Lake

Water Level: 1' below crest

Vegetation: Abundant emergent and submerged vegetation.

Notes: Wild Rice is extremely thick on the majority of the marsh. Boat access is currently very limited.

Elm Lake

Water levels: Below crest

Vegetation: Very little vegetation.

Notes:

Lower Morse Lake Wetland Complex

Water levels: Most wetlands are below crest with the largest wetland (with boat ramp) being near crest.

Vegetation: Is highly variable, ranging from near complete coverage to almost none.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly encouraged due to lower water levels and varying water conditions.

GRAND RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Chad Paup, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/24/2020

ADAMS COUNTY

Lake Icaria

Water levels: Water level is very low

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is there

Notes:

UNION COUNTY

Mitchell Marsh

Water levels: Water level is good.

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is good

Notes:

GREAT LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Chris LaRue, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/24/2020

DICKINSON COUNTY

Christopherson Slough

Water levels: The main marsh is below crest level due to the very dry conditions and to help low Little Swan Lake for renovation.

Vegetation: Vegetation is good in most large marshes and fair within main Slough for waterfowl habitat.

Notes: Boat access should be ok on the Slough for large and small outboard motors.

Diamond Lake

Water levels: Diamond Lake is in complete drawdown to kill rough fish and to improve aquatic vegetation and migratory bird habitat. The Lake is NOT accessible by boat. Most large wetlands have water for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Vegetation: Vegetation is good in most areas with a large amount of sub-emergent vegetation in the main lake.

Notes: Diamond Lake is NOT accessible by boat. The Lake is intended to be brought back up to crest level in 2021 which should make sore very good hunting next year.

Dugout Creek

Water levels: Dugout is below crest level due to the extremely dry conditions. Most all small wetlands are dry however some larger wetlands have water for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Vegetation: The main marsh is in good condition this year. Most wetlands in the complex have good vegetation at this time.

Notes: There is average water for large and small boats with appropriate motors on the main marsh.

Garlock Slough

Water levels: Garlock Slough is near crest elevation with West Lake Okoboji and has decent water at this time. However, if the extremely dry conditions continue it may be difficult to access later this fall. Most large wetlands have some water for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Vegetation: Vegetation is marginal on the main Slough and decent in most wetlands after the 2020 growing season.

Notes: Garlock does not have boat access but is accessible by canoe or kayak and walk-in shoreline hunting away from occupied buildings.

Grovers Lake

Water levels: Groves Lake is below crest level with the very dry conditions and no rain.

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation appear in good condition. The past few years of high water and rat activity have opened up a few smaller pockets which have been attractive to waterfowl if they can be reached.

Notes: Grovers should be accessible by large and small boats with outboard motors.

Hales Slough

Water levels: The water levels are down but at crest level with Spirit Lake during these very dry conditions. Some of the large wetlands in the complex to the east have water for walk-in hunting opportunities as well.

Vegetation: Vegetation is in good condition on the main slough.

Notes: Hales Slough is accessible by some boats.

Horseshoe Lake WMA

Water levels: The lake is below crest level during this very dry period in NW Iowa. The area is accessible by small boats with appropriate motors.

Vegetation: The area has good emergent and submergent vegetation and habitat.

Notes: **Horseshoe Lake is OUTSIDE the Jemmerson Slough Waterfowl Refuge and therefore IS OPEN to public hunting.**

Jemmerson Slough

Water levels: Jemmerson Slough is below crest levels due to drought conditions.

Vegetation: Vegetation is very good on most of the area.

Notes: **The pools with boat access are inside the WATERFOWL REFUGE and therefore Closed To Hunting. The Jemmerson Slough Wetlands Complex is about 1,100 acres in size. About 665 acres is in the Waterfowl Refuge that was established in 2009. The refuge is closed to ALL Public Hunting Access when the duck season is open. There are some wetlands outside the refuge that can provide good walk-in hunting opportunities when water conditions allow.**

Kattleson-Hogsback Complex

Water levels: The water levels are well below crest due to drought conditions. Most large wetlands have some water for walk-in hunting opportunities.

West Hottes was in partial drawdown this year to improve aquatic vegetation for water quality and excellent waterfowl habitat. Water levels are being slowly brought up to improve boat access and to enhance the area for waterfowl.

Marble Lake was not in drawdown but is also in very good condition for the waterfowl season. Marble is at the same elevation as Spirit Lake which is below crest at this time.

Vegetation: Vegetation is good on most all of the marshes and wetlands in the complex.

Notes: Boat access is ok for large and small boats with appropriate motors. Please note that West Hottes will be below normal crest level and may be more difficult to access in 2020.

[Little Swan Lake](#)

Water levels: The lake is in total drawdown to improve aquatic vegetation and to remove rough fish. The area is not accessible by boat at all.

Vegetation: Vegetation is coming along after the very dry conditions and this growing season. If the rough fish are removed the Lake and habitat may be in excellent condition in 2021.

Notes: Some larger wetlands have water for good walk-in hunting opportunities.

[Sidel Marsh](#)

Water levels: The marsh is well below crest level due to very dry conditions.

Vegetation: Vegetation is good

Notes: There is water for good walk-in hunting opportunities.

[Spring Run](#)

Water levels: Most all large wetlands have some water at this time. However, small wetlands are dry at this point. Prairie Lake & Pleasant Lake are below crest level however they are accessible for hunting.

Vegetation: Vegetation is very good in most of the complex

Notes: Boat access is good on all the large marshes and shallow lakes in the complex. The entire complex has excellent walk-in hunting opportunities on the larger marshes with water.

Lily Lake has been in drawdown due to the structure being damaged. Boards were put back into the area in early July however, it is not accessible due to the drought conditions at this time.

Welch Lake Complex

Water levels: Most all larger wetlands have some water but all smaller basins are now dry within the complex.

Vegetation: Vegetation is very good on most all the wetlands

Notes: Welch Lake is an excellent area for walk-in hunting opportunities.

Yager Slough

Water levels: Yager Slough is well below crest level due to the extremely dry conditions at this time.

Vegetation: Vegetation has improved during the growing season.

Notes: Yager Slough provides some good walk-in hunting opportunities in areas that have decent water.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Rush Lake

Water levels: Rush lake is well below crest level due to very dry conditions.

Vegetation: Vegetation is fair to marginal but has improved slightly with the lower water levels this year.

Notes: Duck boat access should be ok with appropriate motors.

IOWA RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Steve Woodruff, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 10/15/20

BENTON COUNTY

Dudgeon Lake

Water levels: Water levels low

Vegetation: vegetation good

Notes:

JOHNSON COUNTY

Hawkeye Wildlife Area

Water levels: Very dry conditions . Currently water level at Hawkeye Unit is 686.12

Vegetation: Mud Flats are vegetated nicely. Excellent food source for migrating waterfowl.

Notes: Swallow basins dry

Swan Lake

Water levels: Low water level.

Vegetation: Vegetation around perimeter

Notes:

TAMA COUNTY

Otter Creek

Water levels: All pools at crest.

Vegetation: Vegetation in outstanding condition

Notes:

MAQUOKETA WILDLIFE UNIT

Curt Kemmerer, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/22/20

CLINTON COUNTY

Goose Lake

Water levels: North Pool: Conditions have improved since the teal season, but the water is still over 1 foot below crest.

Center Pool: The water level is about 6 inches below crest.

South Pool: Water levels are near crest.

Vegetation: North Pool: Typical coverage of lily pads and pickerel weed.

Center Pool: The open water area is again completely covered with lily pads.

South Pool: Typical open areas in the deeper ditches and on the south end.

Notes: Boat access is going to be difficult. Scouting is highly recommended.

JACKSON COUNTY

Green Island

Water levels: Water level on the high side of the marsh is a little over 1 foot below the normal fall crest, but is at a typical level for the early opener. The walk-in area is still mostly dry. We are sitting at the typical water level on the Blake's Lake side of the marsh.

Vegetation: High water for the past 3 years has caused substantial die back of the emergent vegetation and timber across the area. The dry conditions in August allowed for some growth of smartweed, arrowhead, lotus, and some rushes.

Notes: Boat access is normal for this time of year. Scouting is highly recommended.

JONES COUNTY

Muskrat Slough

Water levels: Water level is at normal fall crest.

Vegetation: The open water center of the marsh is devoid of emergent vegetation. Submerged coontail may cause some problems for outboards early in the season.

Notes:

SCOTT COUNTY

Princeton

Water levels: Water level is a half foot below fall crest.

Vegetation: The traditional open water area is covered with lotus, lily pads and arrowhead, which will die back with colder weather.

Notes: Boat access has greatly improved since the teal season opener. Mud motors should be able to get around the marsh. The north boat channel was cleaned out this summer and is easily accessible all the way out to the turn at the pumphouse, at which point the dredge cut stops. Scouting is highly recommended.

MISSOURI RIVER WILDLIFE UNIT

Doug Chafa, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/24/20

HARRISON COUNTY

Round Lake

Water levels:

Vegetation:

Notes:

Nobles Lake

Water levels:

Vegetation:

Notes:

Tyson Bend

Water levels: Missouri River is at 32,200 cfs, slightly below normal navigation flow.

Vegetation:

Notes: Access road is closed from flood damage.

Soldier Bend

Water levels: Missouri River is at 32,200 cfs, slightly below normal navigation flow.

Vegetation:

Notes:

California Bend

Water levels:

Vegetation:

Notes: Access by Missouri River only, river is at 32,200 cfs

MONONA COUNTY

Badger Lake

Water levels: At crest elevation.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Louisville Bend

Water levels: 1 ft below crest

Vegetation:

Notes:

Tieville Bend

Water levels: 2 ft below crest

Vegetation:

Notes:

WOODBURY COUNTY

Browns Lake

Water levels: 0.5 ft below crest

Vegetation: Lots of lotus in the west half of the lake.

Notes: Concrete boat ramp.

Luton WMA

Water levels: Most of the shallow basins are dry.

Vegetation:

Notes: Walk-in access only.

Snyder Bend WMA

Water levels: 3 ft below crest.

Vegetation:

Notes:

Winnebago Bend WMA

Water levels:

Vegetation:

Notes:

Table Marsh WMA

Water levels: Several of wetlands north of 320th have water but are very low.

Vegetation: cattails ring the wetland basins.

Notes: Walk-in access only.

Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit

Matt Dollison, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 10-14-20

Fremont County

Riverton – Main Area

Water levels: The water level is still 14 inches below normal full pool. Have started diverting most of the water into the north refuge segments. The shallowest disked channels/holes on the fringe of the Larsen Tract (Main boat area) have approximately 8 inches of water in them. There is >20 inches of water at the refuge line. The Johnson Tract (Walk-in area west of the paved access road) is at or near full pool.

Vegetation: The drier conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds and other seed producing plants that will provide ample food for ducks. This also means that there has been a reduction of the amount of perennial vegetation like cattails for hunters to hide in.

Notes: The amount of water in the marsh is what hunters should expect on drier years like this, which we have not had since 2012. If the West Nish watershed doesn't receive rain in the foreseeable future, there is a chance that pumping will have to cease due to lack of water supply. Watch out for dikes/levees that have yet to be repaired following the flood of 2019. The channels should be usable by most boats. Smaller boats with mud motors should be able to access a majority of the Larsen Tract. Know your target, as there are a bunch of pintails using the area currently.

Riverton – Jensen Tract

Water levels: The marsh is at full pool.

Vegetation: The drier conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds and other seed producing plants that will provide ample food for ducks. This also means that there has been a reduction of the amount of perennial vegetation like cattails for hunters to hide in.

Notes: The area should be usable by all boats.

Forney Lake

Water levels: The marsh is almost completely dry.

Vegetation: The vegetation has come back with a vengeance after a year of very high/open water due to flooding. If the marsh receives significant rainfall, the western most portion of the hunting area will have open water as the American lotus has died back due to cooler weather.

Notes: Without significant rainfall it will be impossible for boats to operate on the marsh. The pumps were taken out by the 2019 flood and are currently inoperable.

Copeland Bend

Water levels: Only the deepest portions of the wetland excavations currently have water.

Vegetation: All of the water is free of vegetation and is surrounded by mud flats.

Notes: There are very few areas with concealment cover close to water.

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

Water levels: Only the deepest portions of the wetland excavations currently have water.

Vegetation: All of the water is free of vegetation and is surrounded by mud flats.

Notes: There are very few areas with concealment cover close to water.

Cooper Creek

Water levels: The only water currently is in the borrow ditches next to the dikes.

Vegetation: There is no vegetation flooded with water currently.

Notes: Watch out for yet to be repaired blowouts when walking on unmowed dikes.

Auldon Bar

Water levels: All of the water on the area has dried up except for the deep water scour holes.

Vegetation: There is no vegetation in any water on the WMA.

Notes:

Botna Bottoms:

Water levels: There is almost no water currently on the WMA.

Vegetation:

Notes: Watch out for yet to be repaired blowouts when walking on unmowed dikes.

Draper Bottoms

Water levels: All the wetlands, except the deepest hole in the northeast corner, are dry.

Vegetation: There is no vegetation present on any water on the WMA.

Notes: The nearest public access point is over a mile walk to the existing water.

Mills County

Willow Slough

Water levels: The wetland is >21 inches below normal full pool.

Vegetation: ~50% of the wetland is comprised of cattails with much of the remaining area being dominated by American lotus that has died back due to cooler temperatures, leaving open water.

Notes: The vegetation and lower/dropping water level will make use by outboard motors difficult.

Haynie Slough

Water levels: There is water in the main body of the slough.

Vegetation: There are cattails around the edge of the standing water.

Notes:

Noddleman Island

Water levels: The excavations have much less water than past years.

Vegetation: There is no vegetation in the standing water.

Notes: Concealment cover is limited with the possible exception being the nesting islands.

St. Mary's Island

Water levels: Almost all of the water on the WMA has dried up.

Vegetation:

Notes:

ODESSA WILDLIFE UNIT

Andy Robbins, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 10/14/20

DES MOINES COUNTY

Blackhawk Bottoms

Water levels: Patterson lake is lower than normal.

Vegetation: Dense submergent and emergent vegetation.

Notes: Stoplogs have been placed in the moist-soil unit located north of Patterson lake soon. There are dense stands of moist-soil vegetation (primarily millet and smartweed) in the moist-soil unit. Significant rainfall will be necessary to raise the water level.

LOUISA COUNTY

Cone Marsh

Water levels: Approximately 8 inches below fall crest. Rainfall is needed to raise the water level further.

Vegetation: Dense submergent and emergent vegetation throughout the marsh. Excellent growth of moist soil-vegetation around the perimeter of the marsh resulting from a partial drawdown this summer.

Notes:

Klum Lake

Water levels: Just below normal fall crest.

Vegetation: Dense submergent vegetation. Cattails were sprayed again this fall.

Notes: The Klum lake water control structure is currently being replaced. The north access will be inaccessible during this project.

Odessa Wildlife Area

Water levels: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=dvn&gage=odsi4>

Vegetation: Water levels on the Mississippi River prevented Odessa from being drawn down until mid-August. However, temps in the 90's allowed for the growth and development of a significant amount of moist-soil vegetation.

Notes: Prolonged major flooding over the past several years has resulted in the death of well over half of the forest resource at Odessa. Also, all of the buttonbush ("buck brush") was top-killed, but the majority of it has been able to resprout from its base due to the drawdown. Some water will be added before the 2nd duck opener, but levels will be kept lower than normal if possible to prevent further stress to surviving trees and resprouting buttonbush.

MUSCATINE COUNTY

Wiese Slough

Water levels: About 6 inches below normal crest.

Vegetation: Dense emergent and submergent vegetation through the area.

Notes:

PRAIRIE LAKES WILDLIFE UNIT

Rob Patterson Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/26/20

CLAY COUNTY

Barringer Slough

Water levels: Water level is lower than crest due to very dry conditions.

Vegetation: Vegetation is in good condition. Emergent and submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes:

[Dan Green Slough](#)

Water levels: Slough is in drawdown to eliminate rough fish populations and re establish stands of emergent vegetation. Goal is to have huntable water for the 2021 Season

Vegetation:

Notes:

[DU Marsh](#)

Water levels: Marsh has huntable water but is low due to dry conditions in NW Iowa.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes:

[Trumbull Lake-Smith Slough Complex](#)

Water levels: Both that lake and the slough have huntable water but are low due to drought.

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation are prevalent

Notes: Smith Slough boat access channel is partially blocked by submergent vegetation. Small boats maybe able to access with some effort

EMMET COUNTY

[Cheever Lake](#)

Water levels: Lake has huntable water but is low due to drought

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes: Cheever Lake boat access has a large mat of floating cattail mats blocking the access. We have plans to attempt to clear this blockage but are uncertain if we will be able to completely open the access

[Four-Mile Lake Complex](#)

Water levels: 4 Mile Lake has huntable water but is low due to drought. The small wetlands on the complex are low or dry.

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes: Floating cattail mats on 4 Mile Lake move with the wind. This will cause the access on the north end to be usable some days and blocked some days

[Ingham-High Complex](#)

Water levels: The lakes and larger wetlands on the complex have huntable water but are lower than normal due to drought. Many of the smaller wetland are low or dry

Vegetation: The wetlands and marshes on this complex generally has some vegetation

Notes: Bur Oak Lake is in a management drawdown. The goal is to reestablish stands of emergent vegetation. We plan to have huntable water for the 2021 season

[Iowa Lake-Goose Lake Complex](#)

Water levels: Iowa Lake and the associated marshes and larger wetland have huntable water. Smaller wetlands are low or dry. Goose Lake is in a management drawdown. The goal is to reestablish stands of emergent vegetation

Vegetation: Marshes and large wetlands have good stands of vegetation

Notes:

[Tuttle Lake Complex](#)

Water levels: Lake has huntable water. Smaller wetlands are low or dry

Vegetation: Lake has very little to no vegetation. Small wetlands and marshes has good emergent and submergent vegetation

PALO ALTO COUNTY

[Blue-wing Marsh](#)

Water levels: Marsh has huntable water but is low due to drought.

Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes:

[Dewey's Pasture Complex](#)

Water levels: Larger wetlands and marshes have some water. Smaller wetlands are low or dry

Vegetation: Vegetation is good in most wetlands

Notes:

[Fallow Marsh](#)

Water levels: Marsh is low due to drought

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation is prevalent

Notes:

[Rush Lake](#)

Water levels: Lake has been refilled this year but water levels are lower than normal due to drought

Vegetation: Emergent and Submergent vegetation are prevalent

Notes:

RATHBUN WILDLIFE UNIT

Heath Van Waus, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9-22-2020

APPANOOSE COUNTY

[Rathbun Lake Complex](#)

Water levels: Rathbun lake is currently at 903.78, which is below pool elevation of 904. All surrounding areas have great emergent vegetation but are lacking huntable water. The drier conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant

rains this fall. Some deeper pools can be found on some of the upper impoundments that can be accessible by walk in hunters. Water levels are much too low for any boat hunting.

Vegetation: All impoundments have significant emergent vegetation.

Notes:

Sedan Bottoms

Water levels: Water levels are low. Some deeper cuts, deep pools and oxbows are holding water which allowed for low - moderate teal harvest during the early teal season but the majority of the wetlands are dry or have very little water. Sedan is walk in hunting only.

Vegetation: Significant emergent vegetation is present but lacking water for hunting. The drier conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes: .

RED ROCK WILDLIFE UNIT

Todd Gosselink, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 10/16/2020

JASPER & POLK COUNTIES

Colfax WMA and Chichaqua Bottoms Green Belt WMA

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

Vegetation: Vegetation in most areas is very good. Flooding occurred earlier in the year, but dried up by early summer allowing for good vegetation growth.

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 currently very low.

Rock Creek Marsh

Water levels: The water level is determined by the elevation of Rock Creek Lake, which is currently at slightly 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 levels: Lake Red Rock pool is currently at 741.85, and is projected to remain at this level, and even slightly drop over the next 15 days if there is no rain in the watershed. The gates on the dam were reduced to minimal outflow starting mid-September, but increasing the lake pool has been minimal due to low river flows. The DNR has requested that the USACE raise the lake pool to 743.5 on Sept. 30, 744.0 on Oct 16, 745.0 on Oct 31, and 746.0 on Nov 15. The current drought conditions will make this difficult. 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/pelforecast.html>

Vegetation: The vegetation and food for migrating waterfowl is potentially excellent headed into the fall if we have water to flood the vegetation. Minimal flooding occurred this spring by end of June in the lower elevations, which allowed for plenty of time for good vegetation growth. Large stands of wild millet (barnyard grass) and smartweed in the low areas will be flooded this fall if we have high enough flows.

Boat Access: The boat ramp at "OK Hill" is not accessible, since the entire area is nearly dry. The "Box Cars" and Bennington boat ramps are accessible.

Notes: This is the first year that Red Rock lake levels could be raised 4 feet instead of the typical 2 feet every year. This would flood approximately an additional 1000 acres of waterfowl habitat, but a substantial increase of precipitation will be needed to accomplish this.

Swan Refuge

Water levels: The refuge is currently being pumped, and will continue to be pumped to maximum capacity through mid November.

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 levels: 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 after the spring flooding receded.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

Red Rock WMA South River Hartford Bottoms

Water levels: 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 after the spring flooding receded.

Notes: These are walk-in areas.

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

Water levels: Little Hartford wetland has no water due to very low river levels and drought conditions. Big Hartford (Richard's Marsh) is currently being pumped, and will continue to be pumped to maximum capacity.

Vegetation: There is excellent moist soil plant growth in Big and Little Hartford since flood waters receded in June this past year. No agricultural crops were planted this spring.

Boat Access: Little Hartford boat ramp is unusable since there is no water. The Big Hartford boat ramp is usable, with about half of the marsh accessible by boat. Access by boat will increase as pumping continues and water levels rise.

Runnells Marsh

Water levels: 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 end of August, 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.

Boat Access: The boat ramps may be usable, but water level not deep enough to access the east portion of the marsh.

Notes: 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

Josh Gansen, Wildlife Biologist.

Updated: 9/22/2020

GREENE COUNTY

Dunbar Slough WMA – Main Wetland

Water levels: Dry

Vegetation: Drought conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes:

Dunbar Slough WPA

Water levels: Dry

Vegetation: Drought conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes:

Goose Lake WMA

Water levels: 18 inches below crest

Vegetation: Thick submergent vegetation

Notes: Area is accessible by boats however submergent vegetation makes it difficult.

Snake Creek WMA

Water levels: Dry

Vegetation: Drought conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes:

GUTHRIE COUNTY

Bays Branch WMA

Water levels: Very low

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is dominant in the North section.

Notes: Walk in hunting options are available but there is currently no boat access

Lakin Slough

Water levels: Very low

Vegetation:

Notes: Walk in hunting options are available but there is currently no boat access

McCord Pond

Water levels: Dry

Vegetation: Drought conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes:

POLK COUNTY

Saylorville Reservoir

Water levels: Current level is 836.5 and rising to 837.00 current river flows during this drought have made raising water levels difficult

Vegetation: Vegetation looks excellent if we can put water on it.

Notes:

STORY COUNTY

Hendrickson Marsh

Water levels: Dry

Vegetation: Draw down and drought conditions have been ideal for the growth of annual smartweeds, bidens and other seed producing plants that will provide excellent food for waterfowl if we can get some significant rains this fall.

Notes:

SUGEMA WILDLIFE UNIT

Jeff Glaw, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 10/16/2020

KEOKUK COUNTY

Hayesville Bend WMA

Water levels: fluctuate with the South Skunk River which is low

Vegetation: adequate vegetation along the shorelines of the wetland

Notes: Need some timely rains to refill the wetlands.

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Lake Sugema

Water levels: on the main lake, water levels are down roughly 8 - 12"

Vegetation: Fair amount of vegetation especially in the upper arms of the lake.

Notes: Silt retention ponds have adequate water from runoff due to recent rains.

DeVoss/Foster WMA

Water levels: Some water in the borrow areas of the wetland.

Vegetation: Good vegetation response.

Notes: Need a couple good rain events to fill the wetland.

Fox River WMA

Water levels: West segment has water in borrow areas. East segment has good water from recent rainfall.

Vegetation: Good wetland vegetation response

Notes: Need more rain events to fill the west wetland.

UPPER IOWA WILDLIFE UNIT

Troy Anderson, Wildlife Biologist

Updated: 9/24/2020

ALLAMAKEE

Mississippi River – Pool 9

Water levels: The water level has recently dropped 6 inches exposing some mud flats but it is back on the rise so it should be close to “normal” pool by the duck opener.

Vegetation: There is a good mixture of submergent and emergent vegetation in the backwater areas. There may be some mudflats showing up with the recent dry conditions.

Notes: Pre-scouting recommended

CLAYTON COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pool 10

Water levels: The water level has recently dropped 6 inches exposing some mud flats but it is back on the rise so it should be close to “normal” pool by the duck opener.

Vegetation: There is a good mixture of submergent and emergent vegetation in the backwater areas. There may be some mudflats showing up with the recent dry conditions.

Notes: Pre-scouting recommended

WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Cardinal Marsh

Water levels: After the recent rain events the water level at the Main marsh is in good condition . There is a cement boat ramp for small & medium boats and good huntable open water.

Vegetation: There is a good mixture of submergent and emergent vegetation with plenty of cattails for hunting cover.

Notes: Pre-scouting is highly recommended especially if planning on using a boat

Ponds of Cardinal Marsh:

Water levels: After the recent rain events segments B through D have excellent water levels and segment A is slowly filling with a few huntable pockets of open water.

Vegetation: There is a good mixture of submergent and emergent vegetation. Segment A is full of smartweed and bidens.

Notes: The segments are walk in access, pre-scouting is recommended.