

Hook an

It's All About

Each year DNR staff set records in fisheries management like stocking 165 million fish last year, besting the previous record by 9 million! Lakes, fish habitat and angler access keep improving, too. Yet no matter how spectacular the resources and amenities, about a third of license buyers don't renew their licenses the next year.

The good news? Research shows these inconsistent license buyers will fish again if invited! Eighty-four percent will fish if invited by a child, friend, family member, co-worker or neighbor.

So to all our avid angler friends, it's your turn to help. Break the secrecy and invite an angler out. Historically, anglers guarded favorite lures and baits, secret honey holes or special techniques—mannerisms suited for 1890 or 1940—when fish were scarce. Today our waters teem with unprecedented numbers of fish—west to east from

big river to big river—and the lakes, rivers and streams in-between.

So when you invite someone new to fishing or that hasn't fished recently and share your skills—everyone wins. More anglers mean more license sales—funds reinvested to drive even more fish-stocking, even more habitat creation, continued water quality work, more angler amenities and better fishing for all.

So snag a new angler—invite others into the sport, get out and have fun.

And here are 99 counties—full of fish—raring for you to tackle with new buddies.

ADAIR—Nodaway Lake is heaven for new anglers to hook bluegills, crappies, channel catfish, largemouth bass and



n Angler

the Invitation

BY SHANNON HAFNER

an occasional walleye. There is an abundance of 10-inch crappies and 8-inch bluegills to make this lake a top pick in 2019. May and June are prime for crappies and bluegills on spawning beds.

ADAMS—Excellent shore access and jetties make it easy to catch fish at Lake Icaria. Use small jigs and minnows for bluegill up to 8 inches and crappie up to 11 on fish mounds. Cast nightcrawlers or cut bait along the bottom of rocky shoreline areas or the fish mounds for excellent numbers of channel catfish of all sizes. Find camping, cabins, nature trails, playground and a beach at the well-maintained county park.

ALLAMAKEE—Patterson Creek, northwest of Waukon, is a good choice for fly fishing newbies. Grazed pasture provide easy walking and little casting obstruction. Almost two miles of stream on private property is open to public

fishing. Stocked weekly (except in July and August) with catchable rainbow trout, it also sustains a healthy population of wild brown trout.

APPANOOSE—Lake Rathbun is Iowa's perennial crappie hotspot. Anglers catch them by the dozen. It's hot for 9- to 12-inch crappies, especially in mid-May to mid-June. Hybrid striped bass fishing is tough to beat – perfect for newbies to catch a trophy-size fish.

AUDUBON—Littlefield Lake is popular for all ages. Catch 15- to 20-inch-plus channel cats, 8-inch bluegill and 9- to 10-inch crappie. Well-manicured shore access, camping, a beach, playground and trails. Cast for bluegills and crappies in spring and catfish in summer.

BENTON—Shoreside campsites at Hannen Lake southwest of Blairstown let you fish right outside your



PHOTO BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

#MISSIONFISHIN

camper. A beautiful rental cabin sits right next to the water. Kids will revel in catching and releasing 10- to 14-inch bass (15-inch minimum). Excellent shore access.

BLACK HAWK—Venture to the Cedar River in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area for great walleye, smallmouth bass and channel catfish action. Shore fishing is good with access in downtown Waterloo, several city parks, Black Hawk County Park and George Wyth State Park (which also has camping). Use crankbaits or jigs tipped with minnows or crawlers. Small boats are best with shallow water in some channel crossovers. Cedar Falls and Waterloo offer lots of family fun with miles of bike trails, dining and sports and entertainment venues.

BOONE—Venture to Don Williams Lake in the county's largest park. Great fun for all with a campground, beach, playground, trails, golf course and cabins. Catch plenty crappie and bluegill. Dock fishing is good, especially late April and May when crappies spawn. From a boat, drift jigs down the middle of the lake during mid-summer bite.

BREMER—The Cedar River near Plainfield and Waverly has a hot walleye bite. Great access to good catfishing and bonus smallmouth bass and northern pike. Sweet Marsh near Tripoli is worth a visit, too.

BUCHANAN—Self-sustaining northern pike and smallmouth bass thrive in the scenic Wapsipinicon River. Ten public access points provide easy access to lots of pike and smallies as well as walleye and channel cat. Shallow water can make motorboat navigation difficult, so paddle or walk-in—think adventure fishing, folks.

BUENA VISTA—Loaded with public access and family-friendly parks, playgrounds and restrooms, Storm Lake is perfect for kids and parents. Have fun catching and releasing slot-limit walleye (17 to 22 inches)—lots of keeper size walleye, too. Use live minnows under a slip bobber or white twister tails from shore, or toss or troll shad-colored crankbaits April through June. Anything silver works since shad and emerald shiners are the main forage fish. After ice-out, try shad guts or cut bait on windblown shores for channel cat.

BUTLER—Find lots of nice smallmouth bass and walleye in the Shell Rock River. Trophy walleye up to 28 inches and lots of 15- to 20-inchers abound. Float while casting jigs, cranks or live baits, or use small johnboats. Look for schooled fish in the spring below dams, obstructions and cobbles. Cast a jig and crawler, or try crankbaits during summer.

CALHOUN—Hook memories and small yellow bass at North Twin Lake. Shore access along Featherston Park makes

taking kids easy. Stay the night at rental cabins and cook up a steamy plate of fresh walleye or catfish. Venture to South Twin Lake for a hot bullhead bite.

CARROLL—Tons of access at Swan Lake State Park helps newbies get close to the action. Reel in lots of bluegill and crappie from nine fishing jetties, an enclosed fish house or shore—especially in late May and early June.

CASS—Catch lots of spawning bluegill and crappie off the rock reefs and old road bed at Lake Anita in May and June. Drift and troll for suspended fish in June and July. Lake Anita is one of the most consistent pan fishing lakes in the state. A 4-mile paved trail winds around the lake for bikers, joggers, or walkers. The campground is popular in southwest Iowa.

CEDAR—Just 20 miles from Iowa City, Cedar Valley County Park offers lake and river fishing. Cast for bluegill in limestone quarries or try catfishing the Cedar River. A concrete boat ramp provides quick river access. Enjoy the view, camp, picnic or hike the trails.

CERRO GORDO—Great shore and boat angling at Clear Lake, one of Iowa's better walleye fisheries. Catch 14- to 20-inch walleyes (14-inch minimum), with rod-bending trophies running 8 pounds-plus. Good yellow bass fishing and improved chances for crappie and yellow perch. A handy fish cleaning station is available at McIntosh Woods State Park.

CHEROKEE—Experience river channel catfish and walleye angling on the Little Sioux River. Channel cats run 2- to 6-pounds and walleyes span 15- to 25-inches. Try cut bait for cats and twisters for walleyes, or float a live chub for both. Find great shore access and a boat ramp at Wescott Park in Cherokee. Head down the road to Spring Lake for pond fishing. This old gravel pit has lots of shore access and a variety of fish species in its depths.

CHICKASAW—Airport Lake is a short drive northwest of New Hampton. Catch largemouth bass, channel catfish and bluegill. Nestled within the 57-acre park is a campground, beach, playground and trails. This 9-acre lake has a ramp for boats with electric motors. Two jetties provide easy access to deeper water and habitat.

CLARKE—Spend an afternoon fishing at East Lake Osceola. Plenty of bluegill up to 8.5 inches, 9- to 10-inch crappie and all sizes of largemouth bass. Cast along brush piles on the east side and near the boat ramp.

CLAY—Easy fishing for bluegill, crappie and lots of catfish at Scharnberg Pond. Great access with an accessible fishing

pier and rock jetties. Camping, cabins, beach, playground, hiking trail, and paddle boat and canoe rental at the county park.

CLAYTON—Bring along a pole to Big Springs Trout Hatchery and enjoy trout fishing on the hatchery ponds (one just for kids) or the adjacent Turkey River. Primitive camping available close-by.

CLINTON—Escape the stresses of everyday life at Hagenson Pond off highway 67 south of Camanche. Usually not a lot of angler activity. Keep kids busy with good numbers of 12- to 15 -inch bass and 6.5-inch bluegill, along with catfish.

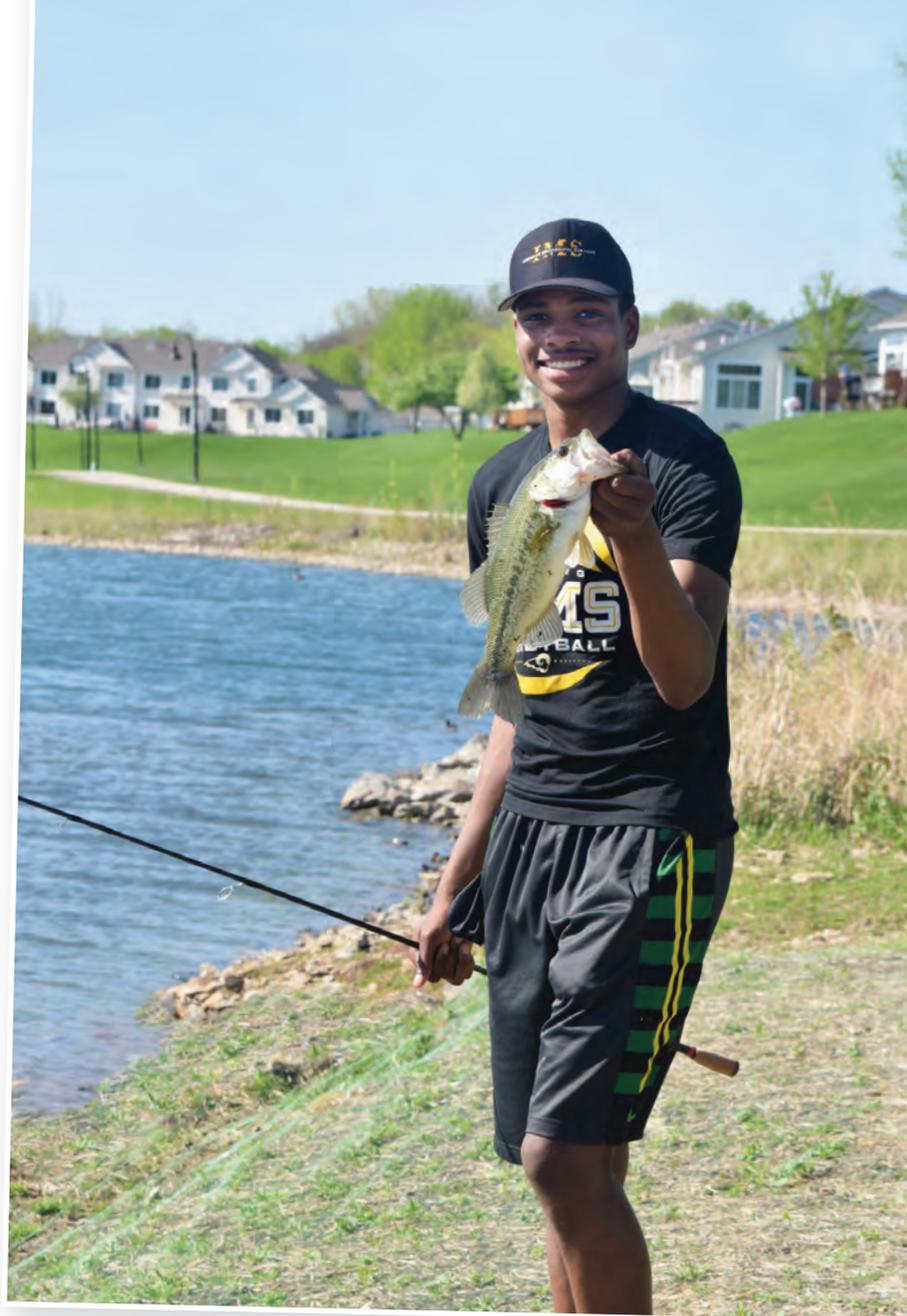
CRAWFORD—Enjoy a day fishing Yellow Smoke Park Lake with someone who hasn't fished in a while. Nab challenging monster-sized bluegill that run 9.5-inch-plus. Largemouth provide a lot of catch-and-release action (10- to 14-inch fish) with the chance to hook a lunker. Admire very clear water from the paved lakeside trail, big swimming beach or water's edge campground.

DALLAS—Escape to Beaver Lake in rural Dallas County. Boaters find good panfishing at this small lake full of timber. Abundant crappies, mostly 7-9-inches, with some larger 10-11 inch fish. Bluegill numbers are strong, with 7- to 9-inch fish.

DAVIS—Escape to beautiful Lake Wapello State Park for unmatched largemouth bass fishing. Good bluegill (6- to 8-inch) and improving crappie numbers (up to 11 inches). Several miles of trails around the lake and through the park. Shaded picnic areas, family cabins and a revamped, rebuilt campground with lake access.

DECATUR—The bluegill bite was hot last spring at Little River Watershed Lake west of Leon. Lots of 8-inch-plus bluegill were caught from brush piles. Slowly troll jigs tipped with twister tails or Lindy Rigs with live bait along rock structure or mud flats for spring walleye (16- to 20-inches). Cast crankbaits along weed lines or plastics near cedar piles for summer bass (some over 20 inches). The lake features several fishing jetties, camping and rental cabins.

DELAWARE—Unique experiences for all ages await at Backbone State Park—trout fishing, cabins and camping, paddling and rugged trail hikes. Explore clear, cold-water Richmond Springs with easy trails. Keeper brook and rainbow trout stocked weekly April through October. Use small spinners, jigs, prepared baits or flyfish. Running



through the heart of park, the Maquoketa River yields brown trout in upstream areas and smallmouth bass below Backbone Lake. Easy lake access for small bluegill, crappie, largemouth and white sucker.

DES MOINES—Don't miss the hot panfish bite at Big Hollow near Burlington each May. Catch 9-inch-plus bluegill and big crappies. Use a 32nd-ounce jig with a 1-inch paddletail body for panfish. Excellent bass lake for 15-inch plus fish. Lots of timber, hidden coves and structure, so bring plenty of jigs and lures. Stocked muskies prowl the waters. Camping, a beach, boat ramp and jetties.

DICKINSON—Something is always biting at the Iowa Great Lakes. Great yellow bass fishing and good numbers of yellow perch, channel cat, bluegill, crappie and walleye. Success from shore is best in the spring and early summer, but there's plenty of action all year.

#MISSIONFISHIN

DUBUQUE—The Mississippi is the go-to, known for great bass, bluegill, catfish, crappie, freshwater drum, sauger and walleye. Shore fishing is limited, with most fishing by boat. Action peaks for sauger and walleye in the tailwaters of Lock and Dam 11 in March and early April. Use heavy river jigs or pull three-way rigs tipped with minnows. The Massey Park Boat Ramp south of Dubuque has easy access to some of the best side-channel and wing dam water. Good backwater habitat is near Mud Lake Park Boat Ramp in north Dubuque. Use a slip bobber rig near brush or rock habitat tipped with nightcrawlers for bluegill and bass, or minnows for crappie and bass. After fishing, find local eateries in Iowa's oldest city and visit the Mississippi River Museum.

EMMET—Ingham Lake has good wader fishing for walleyes. Part of a beautiful natural lake complex, there's plenty of water to explore. Camping, nature center and arboretum nearby.

FAYETTE—It's easy to find a good fishing hole at Grannis Creek with both state ground and private property open to fishing only. Lots of 9- to 12-inch stream-reared brown trout, some larger than 14 inches. Stocked weekly with catchable rainbow and brook trout. Mayfly, midge, gnats, and caddis flies are common.

FLOYD—Rudd Lake, off Highway 18 east of Rudd, offers a 12-acre lake with hard surface ramp, trail, picnic area, playground and a beach. Plenty of largemouth, channel cat and bluegill await anglers from shore or boat. City campground, too.

FRANKLIN—Plan a family fishing and camping trip to Beeds Lake State Park near Hampton. Use several jetties, a two-mile lake trail and a pier to catch 7- to 7.5-inch bluegill, 8- to 11-inch crappie, a few 7- to 10-inch yellow bass and quality largemouth bass, too. Enjoy a relaxing lunch at a shaded picnic area along this quiet, no-wake lake.

FREMONT—Try summer catfishing on the East and West Nishnabotna rivers. Set bank poles or trotlines for channel catfish, flathead catfish and occasional blue cats. Twenty-inch-plus catfish common, with trophy 40-pounders.

GREENE—Easily catch lots of catfish at Spring Lake anywhere from shore—or even fish right from your camper. Burn off that big fish meal at the park swim beach and roller skating rink.

GRUNDY—Grundy County's newest recreation area, Grundy County Lake, is south of the Highway 20 and T-55 interchange in Dike. Catch 5- to 8-inch bluegill,

12- to 18-inch largemouth bass (15-inch minimum) and lots of channel catfish up to 5 pounds. Fish jetties or pier.

GUTHRIE—Float or wade a section of the Middle Raccoon River for lots of 10-inch bass with an occasional one over 14 inches. Use lead-head jigs tipped with half a crawler in the pools, around rocks, or below riffles. Catch and release only regulations protect the population from Lennon Mills dam downstream to the Redfield dam.

HAMILTON—Good access from jetties and lakeside trails at Briggs Woods Lake make it easy for the whole family to be successful. Cast for crappie, catfish, largemouth bass and bluegill. End the day with 18 holes of golf or a long hike in timbered forest.

HANCOCK—Trails abound at Crystal Lake—easy access for newbies and great for adventure-angler hikes to remote areas. Catch bluegill and crappie in May and early June. Rod-bending walleye, northern and largemouth action. Easy access with two jetties (one off Main Street) and a long stretch of shore open through the county park and campground.

HARDIN—Head to Upper and Lower Pine lakes near Eldora for spring bluegill and crappie. Largemouth action heats up in these two scenic lakes in late spring and summer. Pine Lake State Park, one of Iowa's earliest state parks, has camping, cabins, swim beach and more than 10 miles of trails around the lakes.



HARRISON—Willow Lake, in the heart of the Loess Hills, is a great family get-away with nature center, beach, playground and trails. Extremely clear water—be careful not to spook the fish. Jetties and a pier provide boat-free access to deeper water. Plan a weekend trip to stay at cabins or campground.

HENRY—Enjoy a variety of fishing on the Skunk River near Lowell. Find flathead and channel catfish near downed logs, brush piles or creek mouths. Use live green sunfish under a large bobber to entice the biggest cats. Good freshwater drum in many stretches excite new anglers. Try nightcrawler rigs or small jigs. Immediately put drum on ice to preserve freshness for a tasty treat. Stephenson Park has restrooms, camping and boat ramp.

HOWARD—Excellent shore access at Lake Hendricks for bluegill, crappie, bass and catfish. Plenty of places for fish to hang around with rock piles, crappie condos, pallets, concrete culverts and cedar trees, most within casting distance of shore. Hard surface boat ramp, camping, restrooms with showers, playground, volleyball, beach and picnic shelters.

HUMBOLDT—West Fork Des Moines River. Great public access at the Rutland dam through Humboldt city parks down to Frank Gotch County Park (good shore fishing) for walleye, smallmouth and channel cats.

IDA—Stay in a lake cabin at Crawford Creek and enjoy a weekend of fishing for jumbo bluegill, large crappie and an occasional big perch (plus a solid largemouth population). Beach, hiking trails, picnic shelters and paddle boats.

IOWA—Catch Master Angler-size redear sunfish (10-inch-plus) at Lake Iowa north of Millersburg. Good bluegill, largemouth bass and crappie fishing, too. Trails meander around the lake by native prairies and woodlands or run along shoreline for easy access. Quiet, well-maintained county campground, beach and nature center with butterfly garden and bird observation blind.

JACKSON—Lots of public access to popular areas on Mississippi River pools 12 and 13 for spring walleye and sauger and summer bass, catfish, crappie, bluegill and drum. Easy boat access below dam at Bellevue—a pretty river town with blufftop camping and vistas at Bellevue State Park south of town. A small hook tipped with a nightcrawler and weighted with a sinker or split-shot will catch most species. Good shore access below the dam, near the DNR fisheries station, Pleasant Creek, Green Island and Spruce Creek County Park.

JASPER—Fantastic bluegill and crappie fishing await at the 28-acre lake inside the county-owned Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve. Cast for 9-inch bluegills and 9- to 11-inch crappies. A mowed trail rings the lake with easy access to a north end fishing pier. Relax with a snack in the picnic area.

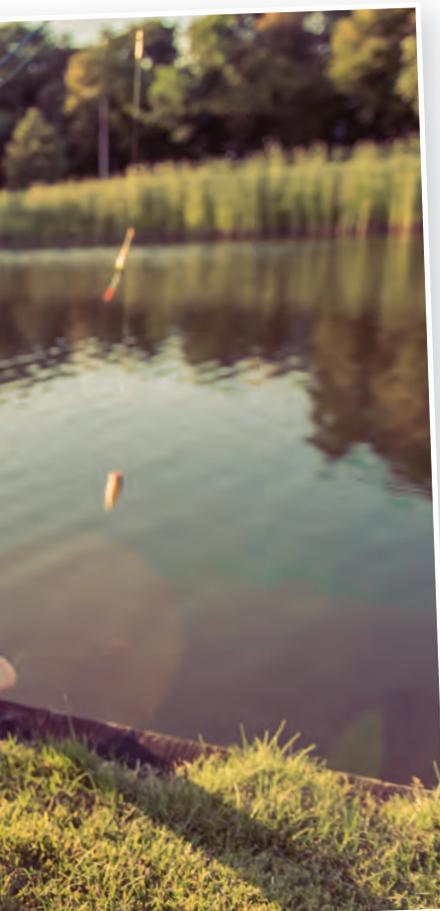
JEFFERSON—Catch lots of bluegills at Jefferson County Park Pond in Fairfield. Most run 6.5- to 7-inches. Bring tackle for many species—bass and channel catfishing is also good. Enjoy the campground, restroom, shelters and nature center.

JOHNSON—Hook family memories at Lake Macbride State Park catching bluegill, walleye, channel catfish and crappie. Easy access to limestone shores, numerous fishing jetties and accessible fishing pier. It's Iowa's only spot to catch prized Kentucky spotted bass. Pontoon, boat, canoe, paddle boat or kayak rentals.

JONES—Excellent river fishing at Wapsipinicon State Park south of Anamosa plus caves, golf and unforgettable views. Famous for walleye, smallmouth and channel cat, especially below the dam near the park entrance. Camping, hiking trails, lodge rental and playground.

KEOKUK—Belva Deer Park Pond, on the north side of the dam for Lake Belva Deer near Sigourney, has excellent shore access with a trail around it. Bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and channel cats provide excellent fishing for kids, beginners and anglers who haven't cast a line for a while. Accessible fishing pier on east shore, restrooms and gravel boat ramp. Fish for large green sunfish along the rocks on the dam; use a chunk of worm fished under a bobber.

KOSSUTH—Put the family on spring crappie and bluegill over 9 inches at Smith Lake north of Algona. Bass have an 18-inch minimum, so large fish can be found. Spring crappie angling heats up after ice-out along the dam and piers. Find outdoor activities at Water's Edge Nature Center on the west shore. Campgrounds, fishing docks, playgrounds, boat ramp, jetty, hiking trail and a couple beaches.



#MISSIONFISHIN

LEE—Hike to White Oak Lake in Shimek State Forest near Fort Madison. Catch 8- to 9-inch bluegill and 9- to 10-inch redears. Fish off the dam, or float a bellyboat to inaccessible shores. Drive to Shagbark Lake for 9-inch bluegill and a shore trail. Enjoy massive white pines throughout the forest. Campground and hiking, too.

LINN—Enjoy a quiet afternoon at Palisades-Kepler State Park fishing a scenic stretch of the Cedar River with limestone bluffs and huge sandbars. Good white bass, walleye and smallmouth bass fishing below the old lowhead dam. Shovelnose sturgeon and channel catfish action picks up late spring and summer. Chance to catch a paddlefish as they migrate up from the Mississippi River to spawn. A popular area for kayakers to start their journey down the river. Hiking trails, camping, cabins, rock climbing, playground, and boat ramp.

LOUISA—Usually uncrowded, Virginia Grove Recreation Area Pond has lots of hungry fish to keep newbies busy. Stocked with largemouth, bluegill and channel cats. Use chicken liver on a medium to large hook under a bobber for

catfish. Nightcrawlers are always good. The pond is isolated from the campground, restrooms, playground and hiking trails.

LUCAS—All anglers are successful at Red Haw State Park. Great bluegill fishing with 8.5- to 9-inch fish and redear up to 11 inches. Loads of quality largemouth and crappies, too. Easy bank fishing with several fishing jetties and many shore accesses. Shady campground overlooks the lake, picnic areas by water's edge and a multi-use trail. Enjoy the beauty of thousands of red bud trees in bloom in mid-to late April.

LYON—Quickly learn fishing basics at Lake Pahoja with fast-biting largemouth bass and lots of bluegill and channel cats. A 3.5-mile concrete trail inside the county park surrounds the lake. Rental cabins overlook the lake. Paddle boat, canoe and kayak rentals, playground and swimming beach. Just minutes away, the large rock rapids at the historic Klondike Dam location on the Big Sioux River provides good fishing.

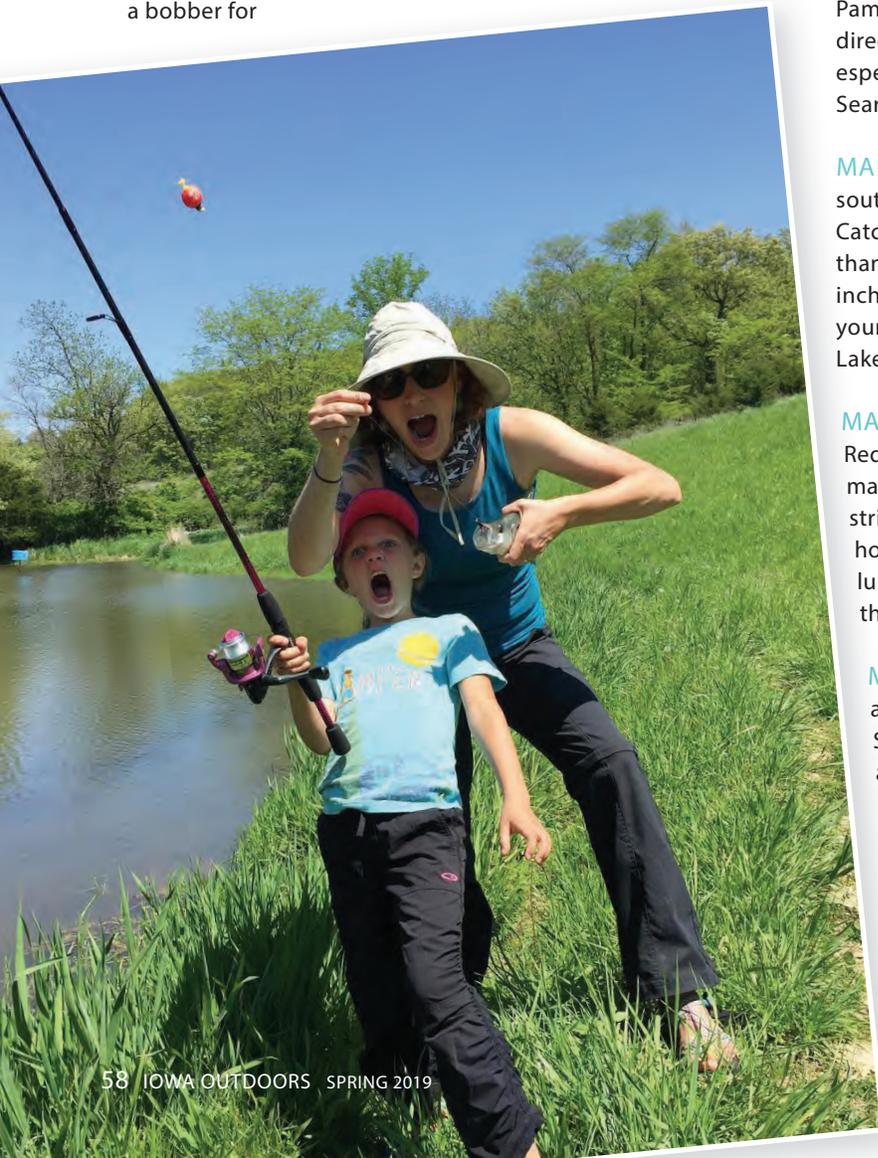
MADISON—Stand atop a natural limestone ridge at historic Pammel State Park to watch the Middle River flow in four directions. Excellent channel and flathead catfishing, especially below the ford. Spend a night in a Yurt style cabin. Search for geocaches along the Backbone and Lodge trails.

MAHASKA—A bass angler's vivid dream, Hawthorn Lake south of Barnes City has huge populations up to 20 inches. Catch 25 fish a day. Abundant channel cat with some greater than 4 pounds. Crappie up to 9 inches and muskies up to 40 inches. Easy shore access with six fishing jetties. Extend your fishing day at nearby White Oak Conservation Area Lake near Rose Hill.

MARION—Explore the Whitebreast arm and the marina at Red Rock Reservoir in May and October for a chance at a master angler-sized crappie. Large white bass and hybrid striped bass fishing provide exciting action. Watch for gulls hovering over surfacing bait fish and toss silver or white lures into the frenzy. Fish below the dam in February through May.

MARSHALL—Find superb largemouth bass, bluegill and channel cat fishing at Green Castle Recreation Area. Several jetties for easy access. Great place to fish from a canoe or kayak as motorized boats are not allowed. Picnic areas, hiking trails and universally-accessible facilities.

MILLS—Plenty of bluegill, crappie and largemouth bass at Glenwood Park Pond keep anglers of all ages busy. Well stocked with channel catfish. Try also for black bullhead and green sunfish.



MITCHELL—Explore Iowa’s western-most trout stream, Turtle Creek, just north of St. Ansgar, and its two miles of public fishing. Stocked with rainbow and brookies weekly from April through October, it also boasts wild browns.

MONONA—Escape to Oldham Lake outside Soldier for peaceful fishing. Good numbers of 8- to 10-inch crappie and nice bluegill (7.5 to 8 inches). It’s best fished from a small boat, float tube, canoe or kayak.

MONROE—A fishing favorite, Lake Miami is one of the fastest improving lakes around with bluegill almost 9 inches. Outstanding crappie angling with fish over 12 inches and good largemouth bass fishing fish up to 16 inches. A short drive south, the upper and lower Albia Reservoir has amazing bluegill fishing with 10-inch fish, boat ramps and excellent shore access.

MONTGOMERY—Viking Lake State Park is activity loaded—lakeside camping, playground, beach, boat rental, restaurant and trails. Cast off jetties for 10-inch crappie in spring and bass and channel cat in summer.

MUSCATINE—Start the day in Muscatine at Discovery Park Pond, close to many attractions including the Muscatine Arboretum and Fuller Park. Excellent bluegill, largemouth bass and channel cat fishing and a chance to catch a trout stocked each spring and fall. Try a chunk of nightcrawler under a bobber for gills or chicken liver for cats. Catch bass with a variety of lures, from rubber worms to topwaters to Beetle Spins. Try flashy spinners for hungry recently-stocked trout; dough baits, corn or other scented baits work best after trout settle in. Stroll to Heron Hideaway Pond, with its renovated shoreline, located behind the Environmental Discovery Center. The center’s large aquarium features local fish species.

O’BRIEN—Big bluegill and nice bass keep kids busy at Mill Creek Lake near Paullina. Easy shore access and jetties. Family fun with camping, cabins, concessions, lodge and hiking and biking.

OSCEOLA—Ocheyedan Pond offers unique fishing. This small former surface mine has decent catfish. Good shoreline access, picnic area, beach and trails.

PAGE—Once a limestone quarry, Ross Area Pits County Park features deep, clear-blue water surrounded by trees. Catch bluegill exceeding 8.5 inches and 10- to 12-inch bass among sunken boats.

PALO ALTO—New populations of yellow bass at Five Island and Lost Island Lakes will keep you busy from boat or shore. Both have a diverse fishery with lots of walleye and catfish.

PLYMOUTH—Plymouth County’s newest recreation area, River’s Bend Wildlife Area, has good bluegill and largemouth bass fishing. Channel catfish are stocked every other year. Restrooms, fishing jetties, camping, picnicking and hiking.

POCAHONTAS—Have fun canoe or kayak fishing for perch and northerns at newly renovated Lizard Lake. Keep your eyes on abundant habitat for wildlife views.

POLK—Plan a quick get-away at Big Creek Lake State Park near Polk City. Here, late April/early May is best for crappie; walleye bite picks up in May and June. Hybrid striped bass provide excellent action in spring and summer. Use the numerous fishing jetties, a universally accessible fishing pier or visit Big Creek Marina to rent fishing boats, pontoons, water bikes, kayaks and more. Kids enjoy the large playground and cabanas near the popular beach.

POTTAWATTAMIE—Farm Creek/Young’s Pond, between Griswold and Carson, has quality size fish. Look for spawning bluegills and crappies along the dam in spring and largemouth bass and channel catfish in summer. Launch a small boat or kayak from the boat ramp in summer to fish to get to deep water and weed lines.

POWESHIEK—Catch lots of 7- to 9-inch crappie and 6- to 7-inch bluegills at Diamond Lake west of Montezuma. Excellent access with 11 jetties. Fish cleaning station, paved trails, playground and many picnic spots. Camp right along the water’s edge or in the newly renovated campground. Boaters must use their electric trolling motors only on the lake.

RINGGOLD—Cast for master angler-size channel catfish (30-inch-plus) at Fogle S.W.A. Lake, west of Diagonal. Catch largemouth bass up to 19 inches, bluegill up to 8.5 inches and 8-10 inch crappies along the brush piles and rock reef off of the boat ramp. Cabins, camping, playground and trails.

SAC—Keep kids busy catching lots of largemouth at Black Hawk Lake, renovated in 2012. Spring and early summer walleye fishing has been great. Cast off of Ice House Point (part of Black Hawk State Park) for buckets of 8-inch bluegill and 10-inch-plus crappies. Fish indoors or outside around lots of habitat from the new accessible fish house. About half of the shore is public, with restrooms near most public accesses. Campgrounds on the ends of the lake make a perfect family getaway. Great playground in Speaker Park, across the street from the lake, and a new splash pad. Miles of hiking trails within walking distance and a paved bike trail runs 30-plus miles to Carroll.

#MISSIONFISHIN

SCOTT—Fish are well-fed and growing fast at Lost Grove Lake, six miles east of Eldridge. Catch 8-inch bluegill, muskies up to 34 inches, 14- to 15-inch walleye, bass (some above 15 inches) and crappies (many 10-plus inches). Easy access with accessible fishing trails and jetties. Platforms help anglers get to deeper water. Spawning beds and culvert piles are within casting distance. Wayward Pines Point is loaded with structure such as brush piles, tree reefs, stump fields, hinged trees, and terraced lake bottom. Popular spot for canoe and kayak anglers.

SHELBY—Bluegills are big and largemouth bass aplenty in Prairie Rose Lake near Harlan. Quickly fill a stringer at the gravel spawning beds and rock reefs early May to mid-June. Abundant 12- to 14-inch bass provide great catch-and-release fishing (15-inch minimum length limit).

SIoux—Find good numbers of bass, bluegill and cats, and improved shore access, at Big Sioux Recreation Area. Concrete ramp for easy access to the Big Sioux River.

STORY—Excellent shore access to Dakins Lake, north of Zeiring, with two fishing jetties and dock with a fishing cleaning station. Catch many bluegill and bass. Stocked in 2014, bluegills now push 9 inches. Camp in the well-kept county park.

TAMA—Easily catch hungry largemouth bass at Union Grove Lake around the fishing jetties and rocky shore. Loaded with 6- to 7-inch bluegill and 8- to 10-inch largemouth bass. Renovated and restocked in 2016. Hiking trail, camping and cabins.

TAYLOR—Reserve a cabin or campsite at Lake of Three Fires State Park—the region's most scenic—northeast of Bedford. Catch 9- to 11-inch crappie with some over 12 inches, largemouth over 20 inches and lots of 8- to 9-inch bluegills. Antique shops and golf course nearby.

UNION—Green Valley Lake, north of Creston, was voted one of Iowa's Best Family-Friendly Places to Fish and Boat in 2017. Cast for 14- to 18-inch bass, 6- to 8-inch bluegill, 7- to 9-inch crappies, and 12- to 15-inch walleye—some top 20 inches. Rent a pine log cabin, camp, walk lakeside trails, swim, or enjoy a picnic.

VAN BUREN—Enjoy a fun weekend at Lake Sugema Recreation Area. Campground and playground, plus excellent largemouth bass, crappie and bluegill fishing. Cast for just about any species on the Des Moines River next to Lacey Keosaqua Park. Campground, playground and hiking trail. Stroll the rustic Villages of Van Buren County—a tourism destination.

WAPELLO—The Des Moines River features excellent channel and flathead catfishing, especially below the hydropower dam. Also great fishing for walleye, white bass and hybrid striped bass. Best pursued in spring, sturgeon put up a fight. Bounce a crawler and slip sinker off the bottom.

WARREN—Lake Ahquabi State Park is a family destination five miles south of Indianola. Fishing pier, numerous jetties and trails provide great access. Catch bluegill, redear sunfish and crappie late April through early June. Rent a canoe, kayak or stand-up paddleboard. Explore nearby Annett Nature Center or attend outdoor events at the Warren County Izaak Walton League clubhouse, across the park entrance. Hooper Lake, across the road to the south has 8- to 12-inch crappie.

WASHINGTON—Thomas Marr Lake, near Ainsworth, is perfect for new anglers. A paved trail loops around the lake. Lots of submerged brush within casting distance of shore. Two jetties provide access to deeper water. Stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, channel catfish, and crappie. A few anglers had great success last summer using topwater baits that mimicked water snakes. Venture to Marr Park Pond to cast off the covered pier, visit the nature center, or spend a night camping.

WAYNE—Excellent largemouth fishing at Humeston Reservoir will rekindle the joy of fishing for anyone who hasn't dipped a line lately. Lots of bass up to 22 inches. Great crappie angling with fish up to 12 inches. Catch plenty of bluegill up to 9 inches. Nearby Seymour and Corydon reservoirs are also good for bluegills.

WEBSTER—Explore Brushy Creek's abundant habitat. Fish areas where multiple habitats meet such as a weed line running into standing timber next to a rocky point. Home to very large walleye, monster cats, 40-inch-plus muskie and quality bluegill and crappie.

WINNEBAGO—Get away to quiet Lake Catherine, nestled in timber west of Forest City. Catch nice-sized bluegill in the spring and channel cat and largemouth as water warms. Two fishing jetties and an accessible pier provide easy access. Enjoy lake views from the cabin.

WINNESHIEK—Take someone new fishing to Lake Meyer. At 40 acres, it has plenty of water to pursue bluegill, crappie and largemouth. A concrete ramp provides easy boat use in addition to abundant shore access. Multiple fish attractors added during a recent drawdown provide lots of fishing spots. The park offers picnic areas, campground, playground and trails.



WOODBURY—Bacon Creek Lake, a fun family fishing destination on the east edge of Sioux City, features clear water, a paved loop trail, playground, restrooms, picnic area and dog park. Catch bluegills and crappie in shallow areas during the spawn (spring and early summer) then move to the deeper water in upper area of the lake. Cast for rainbow trout stocked each fall.

WORTH—Fabulous bluegill fishing at Silver Lake with lots

of 8- to 10-inch fish. Abundant 15- to 19-inch largemouth bass after renovations in 2013. Two jetties and a concrete ramp provide easy access. Spend the night at the county park on the north shore.

WRIGHT—Channel catfishing is excellent at Lake Cornelia off the north end jetty and north shore. Catch nice-size bluegill, 6- to 8-inch yellow bass and an occasional walleye. Hike the lake trails or spend a night at a lakeside camp. 🐾