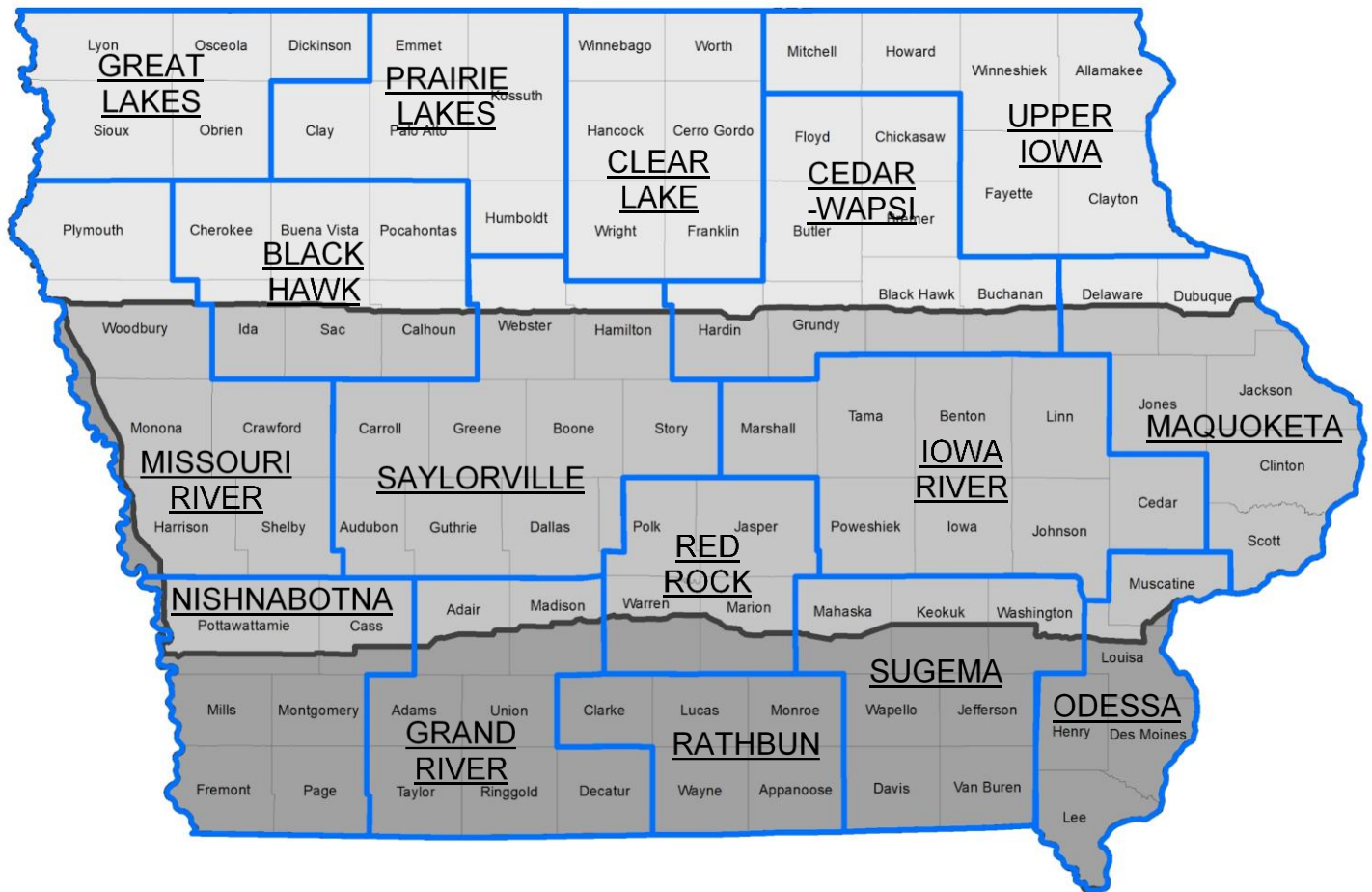


# Wetland Habitat Conditions – Fall 2025

Updated: 9/4/2025



## Waterfowl Hunting Zones

North
  Central
  South
  DNR Wildlife Units

## DNR Public Hunting Atlas:

<https://iowadnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f9161b90cddb4cfb35a96901882a4b7/>

## 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.

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## **Black Hawk Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Clint Maddix

**Date Updated:** 8/27/2025

### **Buena Vista County**

#### **Little Storm Lake**

**Water Level:** Little Storm Lake is currently at crest elevation.

**Vegetation:** Emergent vegetation is thick around the shoreline and there are scattered pockets throughout the basin, heavy submergent vegetation as well.

**Notes:** The rock boat ramp across from Frank Starr Park is currently accessible. Vegetation is thick, after a few boats go through to make a path access should become easier. Little Storm Lake's elevation is controlled by the main lake and should remain usable through the fall.

#### **Storm Lake**

**Water Level:** Storm Lake is currently at crest elevation.

**Vegetation:** Very little emergent vegetation present. Little to no submergent vegetation is present.

**Notes:** Storm Lake should be accessible for all boats this fall.

### **Calhoun County**

#### **South Twin Lake**

**Water Level:** South Twin is well below crest, but has slowly started to fill back up from rains this summer.

**Vegetation:** Over 90% of the lake is covered with very heavy emergent vegetation.

**Notes:** Rock ramp on south end of lake is back open for public use, but with low water levels and heavy vegetation access will be difficult.

### **Carroll County**

#### **Artesian Lake**

**Water Level:** Is at or near crest, the 30-acre wetland is fed by three artesian wells and should stay full throughout the fall.

**Vegetation:** This wetland was drawn down through the Summer to facilitate water control structure repairs. High water levels prior had killed a lot of the emergent vegetation with some remaining.

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

### **Pocahontas County**

#### **Little Clear Lake**

**Water Level:** The water level is at or near crest elevation.

**Vegetation:** There is excellent submergent vegetation throughout the lake as well as a good stand of emergent vegetation along the shoreline.

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

#### **Lizard Lake**

**Water Level:** Lizard Lake is currently at or near crest.

**Vegetation:** There is excellent submergent vegetation throughout the lake as well as decent emergent vegetation along shorelines, with a dense stand on the north and south end of the lake.

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

#### **Shimon Marsh**

**Water Level:** Shimon Marsh is currently at crest.

**Vegetation:** The marsh is heavy with emergent as well as submergent vegetation, with a few open pockets for hunters. Pre-scouting is highly recommended.

**Notes:** Boat ramp is accessible to small boats, but as a reminder no motors are allowed.

### **Sunken Grove**

- Water Level: The water level is currently at or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: The marsh has fair stands of emergent vegetation and little to no submergent vegetation.
- Notes: A concrete boat ramp on the west lobe of the marsh can be used to launch small and mid-size boats. A primitive gravel boat ramp is located in the eastern lobe of the marsh and is only usable by small boats, but with previous years lower water levels has filled in channel with emergent vegetation.

## **Sac County**

### **Black Hawk Wildlife Area**

- Water Level: The Black Hawk Lake Inlet, DU Marsh, and State Marsh are currently at crest elevation. Adjacent smaller wetlands and pits are also near crest.
- Vegetation: DU Marsh and State Marsh has a heavy stand of emergent vegetation. Black Hawk Lake Inlet has decent emergent vegetation around the shoreline.
- Notes: State Marsh has a rock boat ramp that is usable for small to medium sized boat. The Black Hawk Lake Inlet has a concrete boat ramp that is currently accessible to all sized boats. Pre-scouting is recommended due to the current vegetation, boat access may be difficult.

### **Black Hawk Lake**

- Water Level: Black Hawk Lake is currently at crest elevation.
- Vegetation: The lake currently has a few pockets of submergent vegetation.
- Notes: There are 3 concrete boat ramps that can be used by all boats of any size.

### **Burrow's Pond**

- Water Level: Burrow's Pond is currently above crest elevation. Adjacent smaller wetlands are also at crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Good stands of emergent and submergent vegetation present.
- Notes: The rock boat ramp is usable for small and medium sized boats at this time with the current water level.

### **Kiowa Marsh**

- Water Level: All wetlands on the Kiowa Marsh complex are at or near crest elevation; Fielmeier Pond is currently 4 inches below crest.
- Vegetation: All wetlands have good stands of emergent vegetation along their shorelines as well as healthy amounts of submergent vegetation.
- Notes: The rock boat ramps are usable for small and mid-sized boats at Kiowa Proper, Kiowa North, as well as Heidenreich.

### **Sac City Wetland Complex**

- Water Level: Sac City Wetland Complex main basin is 9" below crest; smaller adjacent wetlands have varied amount of water.
- Vegetation: Diverse heavy vegetation is present on all basins.
- Notes: Pre-scouting is recommended to see if there are any open pockets for hunting.

### **Tomahawk Marsh**

- Water Level: All wetlands on Tomahawk Marsh are currently at or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: All wetlands have at least some emergent vegetation along the shorelines, the main basin has 100% coverage of emergent vegetation.
- Notes: This is a walk-in area. Pre-scouting is recommended due to current vegetation conditions.

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## **Cedar-Wapsi Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologists:** Jason Auel and Justin Clark

**Date Updated:** 9/3/2025

### **Bremer County**

#### **Leopold Area**

Water Level: Within a foot of crest

Vegetation: Lots of emergent vegetation

Notes: The area was flooded by the river last week. This may have caused some of the vegetation to lay down. Scouting the area will be important.

#### **Sweet Marsh**

Water Level: All the main pools are within 1.5ft of crest which is typical for this time of year

Vegetation: Lots of emergent and subemergent vegetation

Notes: Boat travel may be difficult with outboard motors due to the amount of vegetation.

### **Butler County**

#### **Big Marsh**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

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## **Clear Lake Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Rob Patterson

**Date Updated:** 09/03/2025

### **Cerro Gordo County**

#### **Union Hills**

Water Level: All wetlands within the complex are at or near crest.

Vegetation: Quality perennial emergent and submergent wetland vegetation is abundant throughout the complex.

Notes: Use the Iowa DNR Public Hunting Atlas to see the waterfowl refuge boundary on the west side of the complex.

#### **Ventura Marsh**

Water Level: At or near crest

Vegetation: Emergent vegetation is still prevalent throughout the marsh, though slightly less than recent years.

Notes:

### **Hancock County**

#### **Crystal Hills WMA**

Water Level: All wetlands within the complex should be at or near crest

Vegetation: Quality perennial emergent and submergent wetland vegetation is abundant throughout the complex

Notes: Use the Iowa DNR Public Hunting Atlas to see the Waterfowl Refuge Boundary at Crystal Hills WMA

#### **Gladfelter WMA**

Water Level: All wetlands within the complex should be at or near crest

Vegetation: Quality perennial emergent and submergent wetland vegetation is abundant throughout the complex

Notes:

### **Eagle Lake**

- Water Level: Eagle Lake is at crest. Pump at the Eagle Flats refuge has been running since mid-August. Smaller wetlands within the complex are at or near crest.
- Vegetation: Conditions within the lake are very good. Water quality is good with abundant emergent and submergent vegetation within the lake as well as smaller wetlands throughout the complex.
- Notes: Use the Iowa DNR Public Hunting Atlas to see the waterfowl refuge boundaries at Eagle Lake and Eagle Flats.

### **East Twin Lake WMA**

- Water Level: The main lake at East Twin is at or near crest. The marsh on the east side of the lake is dewatered to facilitate infrastructure upgrades.
- Vegetation: Habitat conditions within East Twin are very good. Water quality is good with abundant emergent and submergent vegetation.
- Notes: Water levels in the east marsh will likely remain low until construction is complete. The construction contractor will be working onsite until the project is complete.

### **Meredith Marsh**

- Water Level: At or near crest
- Vegetation: Abundant emergent vegetation
- Notes:

## **Winnebago County**

### **Harmon Lake**

- Water Level: The lake and all smaller wetlands within the complex are at or near crest
- Vegetation: Quality emergent and submergent vegetation is abundant.
- Notes:

### **Myre Slough**

- Water Level: At or near crest
- Vegetation: Quality emergent and submergent vegetation is abundant.
- Notes:

## **Worth County**

### **Elk Creek-Pool A**

- Water Level: Below crest but stop logs are in to collect water
- Vegetation: Mid-summer flooding negatively impacted annual aquatic plant production. Some areas on the upper ends of the pool still have pockets of quality vegetation.
- Notes: Mid and late summer flooding has made management efforts difficult. Stoplogs have been installed and pool A is collecting water.

### **Elk Creek-Pool B**

- Water Level: Below crest- water level is low
- Vegetation: Mid-summer flooding negatively impacted annual aquatic plant production. Some areas on the upper ends of the pool still have pockets of quality vegetation.
- Notes: Mid and late summer flooding has made management efforts difficult. Stoplogs have been installed and pool B is collecting water.

### **Elk Creek-Pool C**

- Water Level: Below Crest - water level is low
- Vegetation: Mid-summer flooding negatively impacted annual aquatic plant production. Some areas on the upper ends of the pool still have pockets of quality vegetation.
- Notes: Mid and late summer flooding has made management efforts difficult. Stoplogs have been installed and pool C is collecting water.

### **Rice Lake**

- Water Level: Rice Lake and the smaller wetlands within the complex are at or near crest
- Vegetation: Quality emergent and submergent vegetation is present through all the wetlands within the complex
- Notes: The water control structure at Joice Slough has been replaced and the marsh is at or near crest. High water events throughout the summer caused rooted emergent plants to uproot creating a floating bog situation. Boat hunters will want to use caution at Joice Slough, the floating bogs move with the wind. The boat access can be usable at times but floating vegetation can block the access at times.
- Use the Iowa DNR Public Hunting Atlas to see the Waterfowl Refuge Boundary on the west side of Rice Lake.

### **Hanlontown Slough**

- Water Level: The main slough and small wetlands within the complex are at or near crest.
- Vegetation: Quality emergent and submergent vegetation is present through all the wetlands within the complex
- Notes:

### **Silver Lake and Marsh**

- Water Level: The lake and marsh are at or near crest
- Vegetation: Quality emergent and submergent vegetation is present through all the wetlands within the complex
- Notes:

## **Wright County**

### **Big Wall Lake**

- Water Level: Big Wall lake is slightly below crest (approx. 6"). The smaller wetlands within the complex are at or near crest.
- Vegetation: Habitat and water quality conditions throughout the complex are very good. The wild rice that has been abundant within Big Wall Lake has become less prevalent with increased water levels.
- Notes:

### **Elm Lake**

- Water Level: Slightly below crest
- Vegetation: Areas of emergent aquatic vegetation exist within the lake.
- Notes:

### **Lower Morse Lake Wetland Complex**

- Water Level: Morse Lake is within 1 foot of crest. The smaller wetlands within the complex are at or near crest.
- Vegetation: Habitat and water quality conditions within Morse Lake are excellent despite being below crest. Smaller wetlands within the complex also have very high-quality habitat conditions.
- Notes:

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## **Grand River Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Chad Paup

**Date Updated:** 8/27/2025

## **Adams County**

### **Lake Icaria**

- Water Level: Full
- Vegetation: Water was held over for a couple years to stress willows so annual veg light

Notes:

## **Union County**

### **Mitchell Marsh**

Water Level: Dry  
Vegetation: Good  
Notes: Stay tuned this marsh is getting new tubes and might now re fill this year

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## **Great Lakes Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Chris LaRue

**Date Updated:** 9/3/2025

## **Dickinson County**

### **Christopherson Slough**

Water Level: Christopherson slough is at crest elevation.  
Vegetation: Good emergent vegetation however average submergents.  
Notes: Most large wetlands in the complex have good water for walk-in hunting opportunities. The main slough can be accessed by large and small boats with outboards.

### **Diamond Lake**

Water Level: At or above crest elevation.  
Vegetation: Average with decent submergents but reduced cattails after 2024 flooding.  
Notes: Most large and small wetlands have good water for walk-in hunting opportunities. The main lake can be accessed by large or small boats with outboard motors.

The 2024 flood took a toll on Diamond Lake. A partial drawdown may be started early next spring to help improve vegetation and habitat conditions.

### **Dugout Creek**

Water Level: At crest elevation  
Vegetation: Good to Excellent  
Notes: Most of the large wetlands have good water for walk-in hunting opportunities. Dugout Creek Marsh can be accessed by large and small boats with outboards.

### **Garlock Slough**

Water Level: Garlock is at elevation with West Lake Okoboji  
Vegetation: Good submergent veg but poor emergents after 2024 flooding  
Notes: The slough can be accessed by a canoe or kayak if desired. The main complex has very good water in most wetlands for walk-in hunting opportunities.

### **Grovers Lake**

Water Level: At crest elevation  
Vegetation: Good  
Notes: Grovers can be accessed by large and small boats with outboards.

### **Hales Slough**

Water Level: At crest with Big Spirit Lake  
Vegetation: Good  
Notes: Hales Slough can be accessed by large and small boats with outboards. Most large wetlands in the complex have good water and habitat conditions for walk-in hunting opportunities.

### **Horseshoe Lake WMA**

- Water Level: At crest with recent late summer rains.  
Vegetation: Good to Excellent  
Notes: Horseshoe can be accessed by large and small boats. Submergent veg may make it difficult for outboards, so recommend mud motors.

### **Jemmerson Slough Waterfowl Refuge**

- Water Level: At Crest  
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.

In 2026 a drawdown may be done on portions of the main bays to help eliminate rough fish and to enhance aquatic vegetation and habitat conditions.

### **Kattleson-Hogsback Complex**

- Water Level: West Hottes is in partial drawdown  
Marble Lake is at crest elevation  
Vegetation: West Hottes has excellent vegetation conditions.  
Marble Lake has good vegetation conditions  
Notes: West Hottes has been raised just over 1 foot after the 2025 drawdown. It will remain below Spirit Lake's elevation to help remove rough fish this winter. Recommend small boats and mud motors as large boats may have difficult time with the lower water level.

In 2026 Marble Lake may be drawn down possibly to enhance vegetation and habitat conditions.

Most large wetlands in the complex have good water for possible walk-in hunting opportunities.

### **Little Swan Lake**

- Water Level: Above crest with late summer rains  
Vegetation: Good  
Notes: Some of the larger marshes have good water and habitat conditions. Little Swan can easily be accessed by large and small boats.

### **Sidel Marsh**

- Water Level: At crest elevation with recent rains.  
Vegetation: Good emergent and submergents habitat  
Notes: Sidel is a good location for walk-in hunting

### **Spring Run**

- Water Level: Most all large marshes and natural lakes are at or near crest elevation  
Vegetation: Vegetation conditions are good in some areas but vary depending on parts of the main complex.  
Notes: Scouting is recommended with all the water in the complex.  
Spring Lake, Pleasant Lake, Prairie Lake, and Lily are all accessible by small or larger boats. Lily will need a mud motor to navigate heavy cattail vegetation conditions.

### **Welch Lake Complex**

- Water Level: Most larger wetlands in the complex have very good water due to all the extended rains this summer.  
Vegetation: Good to excellent in parts of the complex  
Notes: Recommend scouting but the area as always is excellent for walk-in hunting opportunities. Welch Lake can be accessed by large or small boats for open water hunting.



### **Yager Slough**

Water Level: At crest elevation  
Vegetation: Good habitat conditions  
Notes: Yager Slough is a good walk-in hunting opportunity.

## **Osceola County**

### **Rush Lake**

Water Level: At crest elevation  
Vegetation: Good to average habitat conditions in parts of the main lake.  
Notes: Rush is accessible by large and small boats with outboard or mud motors.

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## **Iowa River Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Rod Ellingson

**Date Updated:** 08/29/2025

## **Benton County**

### **Dudgeon Lake**

Water Level: At or near crest  
Vegetation: Minimal  
Notes: The Cedar River has been at flood stage several times this summer, so vegetation was drowned out.

## **Johnson County**

### **Hawkeye Wildlife Area**

Water Level: 683.17  
Vegetation: good vegetation at the upper end  
Notes: Most of the smaller wetlands have water in them.

### **Swan Lake**

Water Level: Low  
Vegetation: Dense  
Notes: This has been dry for 3 years and is slow to fill so the vegetation is dense.

## **Tama County**

### **Otter Creek**

Water Level: Otter Creek Marsh is currently at crest elevation.  
Vegetation: All segments have healthy diverse stands of annual emergent vegetation producing seed and covering the majority of the segments. Some open water pockets mixed throughout containing around average growth of submergent vegetation.  
Notes:

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## **Maquoketa Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Nick McClimon

**Date Updated:** 9/4/2025

## **Clinton County**

### **Goose Lake**

Water Level: North Pool: At crest elevation  
Center Pool: At crest elevation  
South Pool: Slightly below crest elevation

Vegetation: Pockets of open water surrounded by heavy emergent vegetation. Good submergent vegetation in the open areas.  
Notes: Aerial spraying of cattails in all three pools occurred in August 2025.

## **Jackson County**

### **Green Island**

Water Level: West Side: About a foot below crest.  
East Side: Above crest.  
Vegetation: There are thick stands of emergent and submergent vegetation. There is a lot of smartweed and wild millet growing this year. Good habitat conditions.  
Notes: Water levels are higher than normal for this time of year due to summer rains.

## **Jones County**

### **Muskrat Slough**

Water Level: At or near crest  
Vegetation: The full drawdown caused by the drought has resulted in a thick stand of emergent vegetation in the main basin. Good patches of smartweed and millet mixed into the cattail stand around the basin edges.  
Notes:

## **Scott County**

### **Princeton**

Water Level: Slightly below crest  
Vegetation: There are thick stands of emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the marsh. A lot of wild millet. Good habitat conditions.  
Notes: Aerial spraying of cattails occurred in August 2025.

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## **Missouri River Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Doug Chafa

**Date Updated:** 9/03/2025

## **Harrison County**

### **Round Lake**

Water Level:  
Vegetation:  
Notes:

### **Nobles Lake**

Water Level:  
Vegetation:  
Notes:

### **Tyson Bend**

Water Level:  
Vegetation:  
Notes:

### **Soldier Bend**

Water Level:  
Vegetation:  
Notes:

**California Bend**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Monona County****Badger Lake**

Water Level: Some small sheet water in otherwise empty basin.

Vegetation: Heavy vegetation from 3 yrs of the lake being empty.

Notes:

**Blue Lake**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Louisville Bend**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Tieville Bend**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Woodbury County****Browns Lake**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Luton WMA**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Snyder Bend WMA**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Winnebago Bend WMA**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

**Table Marsh WMA**

Water Level:

Vegetation:

Notes:

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## **Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Matt Dollison

**Date Updated:** 09/03/25

### **Fremont County**

#### **Riverton-Main Area**

- Water Level:** Walk-in area (Johnson Tract) is dry due to FEMA levee repairs. Likely will not be flooded until November, if at all. Started flooding Larsen Tract (Main boat area) on Aug. 27, water reached the refuge line. More than half of the north refuge is at full pool or has water.
- Vegetation:** Good amount of smartweed and wild millet throughout.
- Notes:** Larsen Tract filling had to be stopped on Aug. 30 due to water nearly reaching the west ditch, where FEMA dike repairs are occurring. Filling will resume as soon as FEMA repairs are completed (Supposed to happen this week, weather permitting).

#### **Riverton-Jensen Tract**

- Water Level:** 1 foot below normal full pool.
- Vegetation:** Good amount of smartweed and wild millet throughout.
- Notes:**

#### **Forney Lake**

- Water Level:** Dry
- Vegetation:** Basin very vegetated with a mix of upland and wetland vegetation. Will be attractive for ducks if flooded.
- Notes:**

#### **Copeland Bend**

- Water Level:** Dry except the deepest excavations and shallow water from recent rains that will likely be gone by teal opener without more rain.
- Vegetation:** The deeper excavations have a little flooded vegetation on the edges. The new shallow rain deposited water is very vegetated.
- Notes:**

#### **MU Payne**

- Water Level:** Dry except the deepest excavations and shallow water from recent rains that will likely be gone by teal opener without more rain.
- Vegetation:** The deeper excavations have a little flooded vegetation on the edges. The new shallow rain deposited water is mostly in standing corn.
- Notes:**

#### **Cooper Creek**

- Water Level:** Some water in the deepest borrow ditches.
- Vegetation:** Little to no flooded vegetation.
- Notes:**

#### **Auldon Bar**

- Water Level:** Dry except the deep scour holes.
- Vegetation:** No flooded vegetation in the scour holes.
- Notes:**

#### **Botna Bottoms**

- Water Level:** Dry
- Vegetation:** Good amount of high-quality vegetation present if flooded.
- Notes:**

**Draper Bottoms**

Water Level: Dry except the deepest excavations and shallow water from recent rains that will likely be gone by teal opener without more rain.

Vegetation: The deeper excavations have a little flooded vegetation on the edges. The new shallow rain deposited water is very vegetated.

Notes:

**Mills County****Willow Slough**

Water Level: 34 inches below normal full pool.

Vegetation: Basin has a ton of moist soil plants/duck food, much of which is currently dry.

Notes:

**Haynie Slough**

Water Level: Very little water. The water level is 2 inches above the bottom of the outlet tubes.

Vegetation: The small area of water is covered with cattails.

Notes:

**Noddleman Island**

Water Level: Deeper portions of excavations have water.

Vegetation: Mix of cattails and moist soil plants/duck food.

Notes:

**St. Mary's Island**

Water Level: No water except in the few borrow pits.

Vegetation: Cattail cover around borrow pits.

Notes:

**Keg Creek I-29**

Water Level: 3-5 feet below normal water level.

Vegetation: Cattails/other veg around the basins.

Notes: Better duck habitat than normal, again this year, due to the low water table.

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**Odessa Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Andy Robbins

**Date Updated:** 9/3/2025

**Des Moines County****Blackhawk Bottoms**

Water Level: Slightly higher than normal for this time of year due to Mississippi River levels.

Vegetation: More open water than usual, but there is still a good amount of emergent and submergent vegetation.

Notes:

**Louisa County****Cone Marsh**

Water Level: Near normal for this time of year

Vegetation: Thick stands of emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the marsh. Good habitat conditions.

Notes: Large patches of arrowhead, water lily, and lotus will create challenging hunting conditions until the first frost defoliates them.

### **Klum Lake**

- Water Level: Near normal fall crest
- Vegetation: Diverse emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the area. Excellent habitat conditions. Mud motors are likely necessary due to the vast amounts of dense submergent vegetation.
- Notes: Due to heavy rainfall this summer, Klum lake has filled without the need for pumping. Occasional aerial spraying of cattails over the past several years has greatly improved habitat conditions by diversifying the wetland vegetation.

### **Odessa Wildlife Area**

- Water Level: The water level is currently being lowered slightly after being well above normal all summer. This is being done to alleviate flood stress on the remaining forest resource. ([NOAA Gauges](#) website)
- Vegetation: Odessa currently has the least amount of wetland and moist-soil vegetation that it has had in several years. This is due to prolonged high water on the Mississippi River this summer that prevented the Odessa water level from being drawn down. There is a small fringe of smartweed and millet inside of the buttonbush and along the perimeter of some parts of the area, but otherwise the majority of Odessa is open water.
- Notes: The buttonbush fared well this year and has put on a decent amount of growth.

## **Muscatine County**

### **Wiese Slough**

- Water Level: Near normal for this time of year
- Vegetation: Thick stands of emergent and submergent vegetation throughout the area. Good habitat conditions.
- Notes:

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## **Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Dusten Paulus and Lucas Straw

**Date Updated:** 8/28/2025

## **Clay County**

### **Elk Lake**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the lake.
- Notes: Habitat conditions are very good at Elk lake.

### **Barringer Slough**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the slough.
- Notes: Habitat conditions at Barringer Slough are very good.

### **Dan Greene Slough**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the slough
- Notes: Habitat conditions at Dan Greene Slough are excellent. Muskrat populations are booming, so expect many pockets to be opening this fall.

### **DU Marsh**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the marsh.
- Notes: Habitat conditions are good at DU marsh.

### **Trumbull Lake-Smith Slough Complex**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation. Smith Slough is also at full pool.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the lake and slough.
- Notes: Habitat conditions are excellent at Smith Slough and Trumbull lake. Once again, muskrat populations are booming, especially on Trumbull lake, providing many pockets of hidden open water, and excellent opportunities. Scouting recommended prior to hunting on both bodies.

### **Emmet County**

#### **Cheever Lake**

- Water Level: Water levels are near crest
- Vegetation: Cheever lake supports abundant and diverse beds of aquatic vegetation
- Notes: Floating cattail mats have blocked the main boat access point. Preseason scouting is highly recommended

#### **Four-Mile Lake Complex**

- Water Level: Water levels are near crest on Four Mile Lake. Most smaller wetlands have huntable water.
- Vegetation: Four Mile lake supports quality stands of emergent and submergent aquatic vegetation. Smaller wetlands have abundant aquatic vegetation.
- Notes: Floating cattail mats periodically block both the north and south boat accesses on Four Mile Lake. Preseason scouting is highly recommended

#### **Ingham High Complex**

- Water Level: Water levels are near crest on Ingham Lake, High Lake, Cunningham Slough, Snipe Meadow, and West Swan Lake. East Slough is in a partial drawdown Smaller wetlands have huntable water
- Vegetation: Ingham Lake, High Lake, and Cunningham Slough have very little vegetation. East Slough, Snipe Meadow, and West Swan Lake all have abundant emergent vegetation. Smaller sloughs and wetlands have abundant vegetation
- Notes: Preseason scouting is highly recommended. Ingham Lake, High Lake, and West Swan Lake provide the best opportunity for boatable water

#### **Iowa Lake and Iowa Lake Marsh Complex**

- Water Level: Water levels are near crest. Smaller wetlands on this complex have huntable water.
- Vegetation: Iowa Lake has very little aquatic vegetation. Smaller wetlands on the complex have abundant vegetation.
- Notes: Preseason scouting is highly recommended

#### **Tuttle Lake Complex**

- Water Level: Water levels are near crest. Smaller wetlands on this complex have huntable water
- Vegetation: Tuttle Lake has little to no vegetation. Smaller wetlands have abundant vegetation
- Notes: Preseason scouting is highly recommended

### **Kossuth County**

#### **Goose Lake Complex**

- Water Level: Water levels are about 1 foot below crest. Smaller wetlands on this complex have huntable water
- Vegetation: Goose lake has a ring of emergent vegetation, with abundant submergents. Smaller wetlands have abundant vegetation
- Notes: Preseason scouting is highly recommended

### **Palo Alto County**

#### **Blue-Wing Marsh**

- Water Level: At or near crest elevation.
- Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the marsh.
- Notes: Blue-wing has good vegetation and habitat conditions this year.

### **Dewey's Pasture Complex**

Water Level: At or near crest elevation.  
Vegetation: All wetlands have good emergent and submergent vegetation.  
Notes: All wetlands in the complex are in great condition for fall activities.

### **Fallow Marsh**

Water Level: At or near crest elevation.  
Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the marsh.  
Notes: Habitat conditions are good at the complex.

### **Rush Lake**

Water Level: At or near crest elevation.  
Vegetation: Emergent and submergent vegetation are plentiful throughout the lake.  
Notes: Rush looks great again this year and should offer excellent waterfowl opportunities for hunters.

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## **Rathbun Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Heath Van Waus

**Date Updated:** 8/28/2025

### **Appanoose County**

#### **Rathbun Lake Complex**

Water Level: Current water level on Rathbun Lake is 907. Water will continue to be released until the lake hits 905 elevation. Wetlands surrounding the lake are at crest or near crest elevation.  
Vegetation: Vegetation throughout the complex varies but overall wetlands have a diversity of emergent and submergent veg.  
Notes:

#### **Sedan Bottoms**

Water Level: Crest or near crest  
Vegetation: Vegetation throughout the area varies but overall wetlands have a diversity of emergent and submergent veg.  
Notes:

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## **Red Rock Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Todd Gosselink

**Date Updated:** 9/3/2025

### **Jasper & Polk Counties**

#### **Colfax WMA and Chichaqua Bottoms Green Belt WMA**

Water Level: Wet conditions earlier have saturated the ponds, oxbows and marshes with water, with the Skunk River still at high levels. The river levels impact the oxbows in the floodplain, and the high river levels are impacting adjacent wetlands.  
Vegetation: Excellent stands of vegetation are present with the abundant rains this year, and will provide great habitat if rains occur.  
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 at very high levels.



### **Rock Creek Marsh**

- Water Level: The water level is determined by the elevation of Rock Creek Lake, which is currently at normal pool, and the marsh has been fully saturated with the heavy rains this summer.
- 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 is currently dropping for shorebird and teal habitat and feeding areas of invertebrates in the mudflats and is projected to be at 741.6 on Sept. 6. The DNR has requested that the USACE raise the lake pool to 743 on Oct. 2, 743.0 on Oct 18, 744 on Oct 26 if the max allowed raise is 744 (due construction on the dam). If construction is finished on the dam during the waterfowl season, the DNR has requested to raise the lake to 747 to put water in some habitat (most habitat was flooded out this summer). Due to the potential for fluctuating lake levels, it is crucial to monitor the lake water level and river flows at the [USACE](#) website
- Vegetation: The vegetation and food will be highly reduced. The high lake levels this summer reached 754 in late August and reached normal pool end September 1 (742). This severely impacted the vegetation below 754, with not enough time for regrowth and seed production. However, the upper areas of the reservoir at higher elevation were not impacted as much.
- Boat Access: The Box Cars, OK Hill, and Bennington boat ramps are all accessible. However, due to more siltation this spring, the Walnut Creek Cut will not be passable until higher lake levels are reached, typically at least 744.
- Notes:

### **Swan Refuge**

- Water Level: The east cell of the refuge is currently full from the flooding in August. The level will slowly drop over fall, and pumping may occur if needed to maintain the water levels.
- Vegetation: Flooding in August reduced the vegetation stands substantially, but there are areas of smartweed that were not killed back and will provide some food for waterfowl in the refuge this fall.
- Notes: The refuge is an inviolate refuge area meaning no hunting or walking in refuge allowed during duck seasons.

## **Warren County**

### **Banner Flats WMA**

- Water Level: The wetlands in this area are oxbows or constructed basins vary in water levels. The large reconstructed wetland by the shooting range is partially full. Other wetland water levels are full, but will vary depending upon the weather and the proximity of the wetland to the Middle River channel, which is currently at good levels for this time of year.
- Vegetation: Good stands of moist soil and emergent plants are present in the wetland areas.
- Notes: These are walk-in areas.

### **Red Rock WMA**

- Water Level: There are numerous oxbows and constructed wetlands in the South River Unit, SW of Hartford. Most wetlands are currently high due to wet conditions this summer.
- Vegetation: Vegetation stands vary based on the summer flooding. Some areas are excellent, and other areas were flooded out in the summer and are recovering quickly
- Notes: These are walk-in areas.

### **Red Rock WMA Sub-impoundments**

- Water Level: Little Hartford wetland is currently full from August flooding, but walk-in only, no boat access. Big Hartford (Richard's Marsh) is very full from the flooding, and pumping may occur later in the year if needed to maintain levels. The boat ramps are both currently usable.
- Vegetation: Both marshes have good vegetation, but reduced in the lower portions due to flood conditions this summer.
- Notes:

### **Runnells Marsh**

- Water Level: The Runnells Marsh is nearly full due to flood conditions this summer. Mud creek flow is currently being diverted into the marsh to maintain the level, but creek flows will determine the levels.
- Vegetation: There is moderate moist soil plant growth throughout all of Runnells Marsh since it did not completely get submerged by the summer flooding (higher elevation than the Red Rock delta area, but still negatively impacted by the high waters in August.
- 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.

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## **Saylorville Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Josh Gansen and Dean Nelson

Date Updated: 9/3/2025

### **Greene County**

#### **Dunbar Slough WMA**

- Water Level: At Pool
- Vegetation: Good vegetation throughout
- Notes: Heavy submergents

#### **Dunbar Slough WPA**

- Water Level: Empty
- Vegetation:
- Notes: Failed Water Control Structure

#### **Goose Lake WMA**

- Water Level: Pool
- Vegetation: Heavy cattail with open pockets
- Notes: Heavy submergent vegetation

#### **Snake Creek WMA**

- Water Level: Pool
- Vegetation: Heavy Vegetation
- Notes:

### **Guthrie County**

#### **Bays Branch WMA**

- Water Level: At or slightly below pool
- Vegetation: North end well vegetated by arrowhead and cattail, and rushes
- Notes: Heavy submergent vegetation

#### **Lakin Slough**

- Water Level: Pool
- Vegetation: Good cattail vegetation throughout
- Notes:

**McCord Pond**

Water Level: At pool  
Vegetation: Cattail and rushes around edges  
Notes:

**Polk County****Saylorville Reservoir**

Water Level: Conservation Pool is 836.0  
Vegetation: Moist Soil Vegetation was destroyed by summer flooding  
Notes: Water Levels will increase to 837 by Oct 1 if conditions allow

**Story County****Hendrickson Marsh**

Water Level: Currently 1 foot above normal fall crest due to excessive rainfall  
Vegetation: Limited emergent vegetation however submergent vegetation is plentiful throughout the lake.  
Notes:

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**Sugema Wildlife Unit**

**Wildlife Biologist:** Jeff Glaw

**Date Updated:** 9/04/2025

**Keokuk County****Hayesville Bend WMA**

Water Level: Crest  
Vegetation: Excellent  
Notes:

**Van Buren County****Lake Sugema**

Water Level: Crest  
Vegetation: Average  
Notes:

**DeVoss/Foster WMA**

Water Level: Crest  
Vegetation: Excellent  
Notes:

**Fox River WMA**

Water Level: Crest  
Vegetation: Good  
Notes:

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## Upper Iowa Wildlife Unit

Wildlife Biologist: Troy Anderson

Date Updated: 9/04/2025

### Allamakee County

#### Mississippi River-Pool 9

- Water Level: The water level is nearly one foot higher than normal “pool” at this time of year due to some heavy rains that we have received a few weeks ago. This should make for good navigation and plenty of places to hunt.
- Vegetation: With a fairly consistent level this summer there is a good mix of submergent and emergent vegetation. “Wild” rice has become more abundant recently.
- Notes: As always with the Mississippi River, pool levels may rise or fall with rain events or lack thereof. Pre scouting is recommended.

### Clayton County

#### Mississippi River-Pool 10

- Water Level: The water level is nearly one foot higher than normal “pool” at this time of year due to some heavy rains that we have received a few weeks ago. This should make for good navigation and plenty of places to hunt.
- Vegetation: With a fairly consistent level this summer there is a good mix of submergent and emergent vegetation. “Wild” rice has become more abundant recently.
- Notes: As always with the Mississippi River, pool levels may rise or fall with rain events or lack thereof. Pre scouting is recommended.

### Winneshiek County

#### Cardinal Marsh-Main Marsh

- Water Level: Good early season water level. The water level should provide good boat access from the north boat ramp and should be able to navigate throughout the main marsh.
- Vegetation: The main marsh has a good mix of emergent and submergent vegetation with plenty of open water to provide excellent hunting conditions.
- Notes: Pre scouting is recommended, boat size and type of motor (surface drive, standard prop, etc.) may limit how far one can travel throughout the marsh.

#### Cardinal Marsh-Segments

- Water Level: Segments A, B and C have good water levels for the early season. Segment D was dewatered this summer for some wetland restoration to create some more open water opportunities. This project should be done soon and will be able to hold some water for the later seasons.
- Vegetation: There is a good mix of submergent and emergent vegetation in segments A, B and C, along with some good huntable open water. Segment B was drawn down this summer and has an abundance of rice cut grass with less open water. Segment D has bare dirt and will be seeded as soon as the project is complete.
- Notes: The segments are mainly walk-in areas and pre-scouting is recommended.