



# 2026

## IOWA FISHING REGULATIONS

**IOWA | DNR**  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# FREE FISHING DAYS

## June 5, 6 & 7

### Iowa Residents Only

*This is a SUMMARY of rules and regulations you need to fish in Iowa. It is not a complete list of all fishing regulations.*

*For more information, visit [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) or contact the DNR Central Office in Des Moines at 515-725-8200.*

[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)  
[www.gooutdoorsiowa.com](http://www.gooutdoorsiowa.com)

## Contents

Be a Responsible Angler .....	3
License & Permit Requirements .....	3
Threatened & Endangered Species .....	4
General Fishing Regulations .....	5
Fishing Seasons & Limits .....	9
Fish Identification.....	14
License Agreements with Bordering States .....	16
Health Advisories for Eating Fish.....	17
Aquatic Invasive Species.....	18
Fisheries Offices Phone Numbers .....	20
First Fish & Master Angler Awards .....	21
Conservation Officers Phone Numbers .....	23

**Free Language Assistance**—If you speak a non-English language, we offer you language assistance services free of charge. Call 515-725-8200.

**Asistencia lingüística gratuita**—Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Llame al 515-725-8200.

Invite a kid, your best friend or a spouse to go fishing on Iowa's **Free Fishing weekend, June 5, 6 and 7**. Iowa residents may fish without a license or trout fee; all other regulations remain in place.

## License and Permit Fees

License/Permit	Resident On Sale Dec. 15, 2025	Nonresident On Sale Jan. 1, 2026
Annual 16 years old and older	\$22.00	\$48.00
3-Year	\$62.00	Not Available
7-Day	\$15.50	\$37.50
3-Day	Not Available	\$20.50
1-Day	\$10.50	\$12.00
Annual 3rd Fishing Line Permit (Bonus Line)	\$14.00	\$14.00
Trout Fee	\$14.50	\$17.50
<b>Veterans Fishing License</b>	\$7.00	Not Available
<b>Veterans Hunting &amp; Fishing Combo</b>	\$7.00	Not Available
Lifetime (65 years old and older)	\$61.50	Not Available
Lifetime Trout Fee (65 years old and older)	\$65.00	Not Available
Boundary Water Sport Troline	\$26.00	\$49.50
Fishing, Hunting, Habitat Fee Combo	\$55.00	Not Available
Paddlefish Fishing License & Tag	\$25.50	\$49.00

**YOUR LICENSE DOLLARS, YOUR LEGACY**

**100%**  
of license fees go directly to the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund.

Your license dollars are directly reinvested to ensure Iowa maintains its strong outdoor traditions.

- WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
- BOAT RAMP REPAIRS
- PUBLIC & PRIVATE LAND ACCESS
- WILDLIFE HABITAT DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS
- FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
- LAW ENFORCEMENT

A fishing license is the start of endless excitement, exploration, memories and fun.

Download the GoOutdoorsIowa app to make your adventures even easier. You'll have your license plus regulations and more conveniently on your phone.



**SCAN TO  
DOWNLOAD  
THE APP**

## Be a Responsible Angler

- Be considerate of anglers with special physical needs when fishing universally accessible facilities.
- Clean up any litter you bring with you and pick up trash, even if you didn't leave it.
- Recycle used fishing line and bait containers.
- Do not spill gas, oil or other pollutants on land or into the water.
- Take precautions not to spread invasive plants or animals (see p. 18).
- Report fishing and boating violations at 1-800-532-2020.
- Obey all fishing regulations.
- Be courteous and respectful to all anglers and boaters.
- Sinkers, including split shots, are now made from steel, tin, bismuth and tungsten for anglers concerned about using lead tackle.

## License and Permit Requirements

You can take fish, mussels, turtles, frogs and bait with a sport fishing license according to the regulations listed in this booklet. **You cannot buy or sell, dead or live, a fish, mussel, turtle, frog or bait with a sport fishing license.**

## Who Needs a Fishing License

Iowa residents and nonresidents 16 years and older must have a valid fishing license on their person while fishing, and have paid all applicable fees.

**License Exceptions:** You do **not** need a fishing license if...

- You are a resident or nonresident under 16 years old.
- You are a minor pupil of the state school for the deaf, or minor inmate of other state institutions under the Department of Human Services (not including inmates in state penal institutions).
- You are a patient of a substance abuse facility and supervised by an employee of the facility while fishing, and the facility has been issued a permit from the DNR. A person supervising a group must have an individual fishing license in order to fish with the group.
- You are on active duty with the Armed Forces of the U.S., on authorized leave from a duty station outside of Iowa and qualify as an Iowa resident. You must carry your leave papers and a copy of your current earnings statement showing a tax deduction for Iowa income taxes while fishing. In lieu of the

earnings statement, you may claim residency by being registered to vote in Iowa.

- You are a resident or nonresident landowner or tenant fishing on your land. Your children under age 18 can also fish without a license on your land.

## Buying a License

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is required to collect social security numbers from anyone getting a hunting, fishing or other recreational license under section 252J.8 of the Code of Iowa and 42 U.S. Code 666(a)(13). Your social security number is your principal identification number to determine if you are eligible for licenses. It will be provided to enforcement agencies to establish, modify and enforce child support and tax obligations. It **WILL NOT** appear on your hunting or fishing license.

**Logan's Law**, named after Logan Luft, was enacted in 2019. You can now register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor when you buy your Iowa fishing and hunting licenses, similar to when you get or renew your driver's license. For more information, visit [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

## Requirements to Buy Resident Licenses

NOTE: Iowa residents who have previously hunted, fished and/or trapped as nonresidents should plan ahead to get license privileges as soon as possible. The electronic licensing system for hunting, fishing and trapping automatically identifies people who have previously bought licenses as nonresidents. This law change was made to identify a growing problem in Iowa of nonresidents falsifying records to illegally get (invalid) resident licenses. If you previously bought a nonresident Iowa license, but are now eligible for resident licenses, you must fill out and return the **resident license application form** available at [www.iowadnr.gov/fishlicense](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishlicense). License vendors **CANNOT** make this change at the point of sale and it cannot be done over the phone. Contact the local conservation officer for more information (p. 23).

A **resident** must meet one of the following criteria.

1. Iowa has been your principal and main residence or domicile for at least 90 consecutive days **immediately** before you apply for or buy a resident license and you have an Iowa driver's license or non-operator's ID. Factors to determine

your domicile include, but are not limited to, place of employment, mailing (street) address, utility records, real estate records, vehicle registrations and addresses listed on your state and federal income tax records.

You are not considered a resident under this paragraph if you live in Iowa only for a special or temporary purpose including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing or trapping.

2. You are a full-time student at an accredited educational institution in Iowa and live in Iowa while attending the educational institution, or are a full-time student under 25 years of age at an accredited educational institution outside the state as long as at least one parent or legal guardian maintains a principal and main residence in Iowa.

3. You are a student who qualifies as a resident pursuant to the above paragraph only to buy any resident license specified in section 483A.1 or 484A.2.

4. You are a nonresident under 18 years of age with a parent who is a legal resident of Iowa.

5. You are a member of the Armed Forces of the United States who is serving on active duty, claims residency in Iowa, and has filed a state individual income tax return for the preceding year, or is stationed in Iowa.

**Dual Residency Not Permitted:** Unless you qualify under 2, 3, 4 or 5 in the previous section, you cannot buy or apply for any resident license or permit if you have claimed residency in any other state or country.

## Special Licenses for Residents

Iowa offers free annual fishing and hunting licenses and veteran lifetime fishing and hunting licenses to qualifying residents.

Applications for and help with these special licenses are available at the DNR central office by calling 515-725-8200.

## Trout Fee

Iowa residents and nonresidents who are required to have a fishing license must pay the Trout Fee to fish for or possess trout. Exception: Iowa residents and nonresidents under 16 years old may possess or fish for trout without having paid the Trout Fee if they fish with a properly licensed adult who has paid the Trout Fee and together they limit their catch to the one person daily limit of five trout. Children under 16 can pay their own trout

fee, which lets them fish without a properly licensed adult and keep their own daily limit (5).

## Littering Public Waters

You cannot throw or deposit cans, bottles, garbage, rubbish or other debris, onto or in any Iowa waters, ice or land.

## Threatened & Endangered Species

You cannot take, possess, transport, import, export, process, sell or offer for sale, buy or offer to buy, nor can a common or contract carrier transport or receive for shipment any of the following species of fish, frogs, turtles, mussels or salamanders:

**Fish:** Lake Sturgeon, Pallid Sturgeon, Pugnose Shiner, Weed Shiner, Pearl Dace, Freckled Madtom, Bluntnose Darter, Least Darter, American Brook Lamprey, Chestnut Lamprey, Grass Pickerel, Blacknose Shiner, Western Sand Darter, Black Redhorse, Burbot, Orangethroat Darter, Topeka Shiner

**Frogs:** Crawfish Frog

**Turtles:** Yellow Mud Turtle, Wood Turtle, Ornate Box Turtle, Common Musk Turtle, Blanding's Turtle

**Mussels:** Spectacle Case, Slippershell, Buckhorn, Ozark Pigtoe, Bullhead, Ohio River Pigtoe, Slough Sandshell, Yellow Sandshell, Cylinder, Strange Floater, Creek Heelsplitter, Purple Pimpleback, Butterfly, Ellipse and the Higgin's Eye Pearly Mussel

**Salamanders:** Blue-spotted Salamander, Central Newt and the Mudpuppy.



## General Fishing Regulations

### Artificial Light

You may use artificial light to take any fish except species listed as threatened or endangered (p. 4).

### Bait Definitions

“Bait” includes, but is not limited to, minnows, Green Sunfish, Orangespotted Sunfish, live or dead Gizzard Shad, frogs, crayfish, salamanders and mussels. “Minnows” are chubs, shiners, suckers, dace, stonerollers, mudminnows, redhorse, Bluntnose and Fathead Minnows. You can only take live mussels from the Mississippi River and its connected backwaters. The daily and possession limit is 24 live mussels (p. 10). **You cannot possess live Gizzard Shad at any lake.**

You can use game fish legally caught by hook-and-line for bait. If you transport live bait from one area to another, it must be in clean water.

### Bait Collection

You need a valid sport fishing license to collect bait for individual use. You can use minnow traps not more than 3 feet long. Each trap, when in use, must have a metal tag attached plainly labeled with the owner’s name and address. You can use a minnow dip net not larger than 4 feet in diameter, a cast net not larger than 10 feet in diameter and a minnow seine not longer than 20 feet with mesh not smaller than one-quarter inch bar measure.

**Crayfish collected from Storm Lake for personal use can only be used in Storm Lake and cannot be transported live from the lake.**

You cannot take or try to take bait for commercial purposes from any Iowa waters, or transport minnows without a bait dealer’s license. “Commercial purposes” are selling, giving or furnishing to others. Bait dealers must notify their DNR conservation officer before operating. The licensee must be present with license in hand when bait is collected. Licensed bait dealers may use minnow seines not longer than 50 feet. **Licensed bait dealers cannot harvest any crayfish species from Storm Lake.**

### Bait Dumping

It is against the law to dump bait in Iowa lakes, rivers or streams. Throw away unwanted bait in the trash. **If keeping bait**, you must exchange water in the bait buckets with tap or bottled water before you leave any waterbody to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (p. 18).

## Boundary Water Sport Trotline

You can use a maximum of four trotlines with 200 hooks with a boundary water sport trotline license in the Mississippi, Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers. All boundary water sport trotlines must have the owner’s name and address on a metal tag attached above the waterline. You cannot sell fish with a boundary water sport trotline license.

### Definition of “Limits”

“Daily bag limit” is the number of fish you may harvest in a day. “Possession limit” is the number of fish you can store in your possession until consumed. Fish immediately released unharmed are not part of either limit.

Any fish taken into possession by holding in a live well, on a stringer, or in other fish holding devices is part of the daily bag limit. Once you reach the daily bag limit of a species, you can still fish for that species, but you must immediately release all fish caught.

You can’t group bag, party fish or exceed the daily bag limit by gifting fish to other anglers. Fish caught and not released are counted toward your daily bag limit whether or not you retain possession of the fish for the day.

### Culling or Sorting

You cannot sort, cull, high-grade or replace any fish already in your possession. Participants in DNR-permitted Black Bass (Largemouth, Smallmouth or Spotted) and catfish (five fish per boat restriction) tournaments are exempted. Organizers of DNR-permitted catch and release Black Bass fishing tournaments can request exemption to the daily bag and size limit regulations, so participants of these tournaments can possess up to five bass of any length.

### Identification of Catch

You cannot transport or possess fish on any waters of the state unless: a) the species can be identified easily by a portion of the skin (at least one square inch) including the scales left on each fish or fillet, and b) the length of fish can be determined when length limits apply. “Any waters of the state” includes from the bank or shoreline in addition to wading and by boat.

### Jug Fishing

You cannot use more than two jugs or two hooks on each jug. You cannot leave the jugs in the water

unattended by being out of visual sight of them. You can fish with one pole with line and one jug or two jugs and no pole with line. You can fish a third line or jug if you have a valid third line fishing permit.

## Fishing Tournament Permits

You need a permit issued by the DNR to conduct a traditional or virtual fishing tournament on public waters under the jurisdiction of the state. Fishing clinics and youth fishing days are excluded. "Fishing tournament" means any organized fishing event, except for department-sponsored fishing events held for educational purposes, involving any of the following: (1) six or more boats or 12 or more participants, except for water of the Mississippi River, where the number of boats is 20 or more and the number of participants is 40 or more; (2) an entry fee is charged; or (3) prizes or other inducement are awarded.

During a virtual fishing tournament, also known as a catch-photo-release tournament, anglers photograph and release fish upon catching instead of keeping them in a live well. An aggregated virtual fishing tournament is similar to a traditional fishing tournament with participants gathering at one location at the same time. A distributed virtual fishing tournament, usually organized as an online contest, occurs on multiple bodies of water and can last up to one year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31). Only five or fewer participants may be present on any one body of water at the same time.

You must submit your application via the centralized special events application system at [www.iowadnr.gov/fishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing) more than 30 days before the event.

A tournament held on a boundary water (p. 16) must be permitted by the Iowa DNR for anglers to legally fish Iowa water, regardless in which state the tournament is based.

## Fishing Private Waters

Much fishing in Iowa is done on private waters with permission from the property owner. **Iowa residents and nonresidents 16 years old and older must have a valid Iowa fishing license to fish private ponds and lakes, and streams.** Only owners or tenants of land and their children under 18 may fish on such lands without a license. All anglers on private waters must obey rules and regulations governing fishing, including bag limits, except there is no daily bag limit for bluegill or

crappie on private waters. Statewide length limits do not apply on private waters.

Just because the DNR stocked a pond, does not open that pond to public fishing. When fishing privately owned waters, ask the property owner for permission to fish, leave the area clean and litter free, do not block lanes and driveways, close any gates opened and do not damage fences.

## Frogs—Catching & Selling

You cannot use any device, net, barrier or fence which stops frogs from having free access to and from the water. You cannot transport any frogs taken in Iowa across state lines. You can buy, sell or possess frogs or any portion of their carcasses that have been taken legally and shipped in from outside the state with a bait dealer's license. Frogs may be used for food or bait. You can catch frogs on your own land for your own private use.

## Hooks

When fishing by hook-and-line, you cannot use more than two lines or more than two hooks on each line when still fishing or trolling. When fly fishing, you cannot use more than two flies on one line. When you are trolling and bait casting, you cannot use more than two trolling spoons or artificial baits on one line. You can use a third line if you have a valid third line fishing permit. You cannot leave fishing line or lines with hooks in the water unattended by being out of visual sight of the lines. One hook is a single, double or treble-pointed hook, and all hooks attached as a part of an artificial bait or lure are counted as one hook. An Alabama (umbrella) rig is not an artificial bait or lure.

## Ice Fishing Shelters

Ice fishing shelters left unattended on the ice or state-owned land must display the owner's assigned DNR number (found on any issued DNR license document) or the owner's full name, street address and city. This information must be in clearly visible, three-inch-high block letters in a color that contrasts with the background. All shelters on the ice between sunset and sunrise must also display reflectors on all external sides. Ice fishing shelters must be unlocked when in use. Shelters and all material used in their construction must be removed from waters and lands under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission before ice melt or March 1 of each year, whichever comes first.

## Showing License & Catch to Officer

When requested, you must show your license (printed or saved on your phone) and any required fee to any conservation or law enforcement officer or to the owner or person in legal control of the land or water you are fishing. You also must show your catch to the conservation officer if asked.

## Mussel Taking

See p. 10 for possession limit. Licensed anglers and children younger than 16 years of age may lawfully take and possess mussel species other than those listed as threatened or endangered (p. 4). Zebra mussels (p. 19) shall not be taken or possessed. Native mussels in the Mississippi River often have zebra mussels attached to them. Remove zebra mussels by scrubbing with a stiff brush before any native mussels are transported.

## Prohibited Stocking

You cannot stock or introduce any live fish, except for hooked bait (see Bait Definitions on p. 5), into public waters without the permission of the director of the DNR. Unauthorized stocking leads to the introduction of undesirable fish species such as Gizzard Shad, Yellow Bass, Common Carp and Asian Carp. When these species are stocked they cause ecological and economic harm by displacing beneficial native plants and animals, and destroying the quality of the fishery resource. You cannot possess live Gizzard Shad at any lake. This does not apply to privately-owned ponds and lakes.

## Tip-Up Fishing Device

A “tip-up” is an ice fishing device with an attached flag or signal to show fishing action, used to hold fishing line and a hook. You may fish a combination of one tip-up and one additional line, or two tip-ups and no additional lines. You can use an additional line or tip-up if you have a third line fishing permit.

When fishing the Mississippi, Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers and their connected backwaters, the following regulations apply: you can use up to three tip-up fishing devices. You can use two or three hooks on the same line, but the total number of hooks each person uses cannot exceed three. Each tip-up fishing device must have a tag attached, plainly labeled with the owner’s name and address. You cannot use a tip-up fishing device within 300 feet of a dam or spillway or in a part of the river which is closed or posted against use of the device. Three

tip-up fishing devices may be used in addition to two lines with no more than two hooks per line.

## Trotlines

“Trotlines” as used in this section refers to lines commonly called “tagged lines,” “throw lines,” “banklines,” “ditty lines,” “ditty poles” and other names.

You can use trotlines in all Iowa rivers and streams, except those in Mitchell, Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Fayette, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties. Trotlines may be used in the above nine counties only in the following stream sections: Mississippi River; Maquoketa River, mouth to Backbone State Park dam; North Fork Maquoketa River, mouth to Jones-Dubuque county line; Turkey River, mouth to Elkader dam; and Upper Iowa River, mouth to the first dam upstream in Winneshiek County.

You cannot use more than five trotlines with a combined number of hooks not to exceed 15. Each separate line must have a tag attached, plainly labeled with the owner’s name and address. You must check the line at least once every 24 hours. Remove all trotlines and parts from the shore if they are not being actively fished. A trotline is considered actively fished if at least once daily the trotline is left with at least one baited hook in the water. You cannot use trotlines in a stocked lake or within 300 feet of a dam or spillway, or in a stream or portion of stream which is closed or posted against its use. One end of the line must be set from the shore and visible above the shore waterline. You cannot set the line entirely across a stream or body of water. Any conservation officer can remove untagged or unlawful lines.

## Turtles

You can take and possess a maximum of 100 pounds of live turtles or 50 pounds of dressed turtles with a valid sport fishing license. It is illegal to sell turtles taken on a sport fishing license. You must have a commercial turtle license to sell turtles, including parts and eggs. You cannot take turtle eggs from the wild.

Nonresidents can only take common snapping turtles, spiny softshells, smooth softshells and painted turtles from the Missouri, Mississippi and Big Sioux Rivers. Nonresidents cannot take any other turtles or crayfish anywhere else in the state.

Residents can take common snapping turtles, spiny softshells, smooth softshells and painted turtles.

See p. 12 for turtle season dates and catch limits.

Turtles can only be taken by hand, turtle hook, turtle trap or hook-and-line. You cannot sort, cull, high-grade or replace any turtle in your possession. Turtle traps must have no more than one throat or funneling device. All turtle traps must have a functional escape hole with a minimum diameter in all directions of 7-1/2 inches to let fish and small turtles pass through. The 7-1/2 inch escape hole on hoop style traps must be in the last hoop to the tail-line. Any unattended gear used to take turtles must have an all-weather gear tag with the owner's name and address. All turtle traps must be lifted and emptied of their catch at least once every 72 hours.

## Unlawful Means

You can use gaff hooks or landing nets to help you land fish. You cannot use a gaffe hook or other penetrating device to help you land a snagged paddlefish. You cannot use any grab hook, snag hook, any kind of net, seine, trap, firearm, dynamite or other explosives, or poisonous or stupefying substances, lime, ashes, electricity or hand fishing to take or try to take any fish.

You must return to the water immediately all game fish not hooked in the mouth, except Paddlefish, with as little injury as possible.

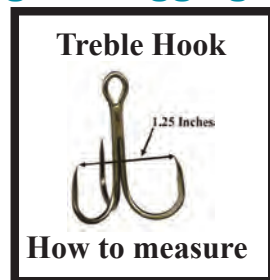
## Bow Fishing & Spearing

You can take nongame fish and frogs by bow and arrow and spear with a valid sport fishing license. Bow fishing and spearing are allowed on public lakes, reservoirs and rivers, private ponds with permission and border waters described on p. 16. Some state parks, federal refuges and lakes controlled by city and county governments may have additional regulations specific to bow fishing and spearing.

## Bow Fishing, Spearing & Snagging

You cannot use a hook larger than a 5/0 treble hook or measuring more than 1 ¼ inches long when two of the hook points are placed on a ruler.

A valid sport fishing license lets you take Common Carp, Bighead Carp, Silver Carp, Grass Carp, Black Carp, Bigmouth Buffalo, Smallmouth Buffalo, Black Buffalo, Quillback,



Highfin Carpsucker, River Carpsucker, Spotted Sucker, White Sucker, Shorthead Redhorse, Golden Redhorse, Silver Redhorse, Freshwater Drum, Shortnose Gar, Longnose Gar, Bowfin, Gizzard Shad and Goldfish by snagging, bow fishing and spearing and Paddlefish (p. 11) by snagging.

**Snagging is not permitted** in the following areas: **1.** Des Moines River from directly below Saylorville Dam to Southeast 14th St. bridge in Des Moines; **2.** Cedar River in Cedar Rapids from directly below the 5 in 1 Dam under I-380 to the 1st Ave. bridge; **3.** Cedar River in Cedar Rapids from directly below the "C" St. Roller Dam to 300 yards downstream; **4.** Iowa River from directly below the Coralville Dam to 300 yards downstream; **5.** Chariton River from directly below Lake Rathbun Dam to 300 yards downstream; **6.** Spillway area from directly below the Spirit Lake outlet to the confluence at East Okoboji Lake; **7.** Northeast bank of the Des Moines River from directly below the Ottumwa Dam, including the catwalk, to the Jefferson St. bridge. Snagging from the South Market St. bridge is also prohibited; **8.** Missouri River, any Missouri River tributary beginning at its confluence and extending below its Interstate 29 bridge and the Big Sioux River from the Interstate 29 bridge to the confluence with the Missouri River with the exception of snagging Paddlefish and rough fish during the open season; **9.** Des Moines River from directly below the hydroelectric dam (Big Dam) to the Hawkeye Avenue bridge in Fort Dodge; **10.** Des Moines River from directly below the Little Dam to the Union Pacific Railroad bridge in Fort Dodge; **11.** Skunk River, from directly below the Oakland Mills Dam to the downstream end of the 253rd Street boat ramp.

**Snagging, bow and arrow fishing and spearing is not permitted in the following areas:** **1.** From the Ventura Grade roadway, jetties and bridges of Clear Lake and Ventura Marsh; **2.** Within 300 feet of the concrete culvert and metal fish barrier of Lost Island Lake Inlet; **3.** Within 300 feet of the outlet and metal fish barrier of Lost Island Lake Outlet; **4.** Within 300 feet of the outlet and metal fish barrier of Barringer Slough; **5.** Beginning at 230th Avenue and extending downstream to the signed Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary District property line of Lower Gar Lake outlet.

## Fishing Seasons and Limits

<b>Black Bass</b> Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted bass combined
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limit:</b> All Inland Waters and Interior Streams and River Impoundments - combined daily 3 and possession of 6. See p. 16 for boundary lakes.
<b>Inland Waters<sup>1</sup></b>
Length Limits - public lakes, including Coralville, Rathbun, Saylorville and Red Rock reservoirs - 15-inch minimum except as otherwise posted; special regulations are posted at:
A. 18-inch minimum at lakes <b>Ada Hayden</b> (Story); <b>Ahquabi, Hooper</b> (Warren); <b>Big Creek, Thomas Mitchell, Yellow Banks</b> (Polk); <b>Casey</b> (Tama); <b>Cold Springs</b> (Cass); <b>Green Valley</b> (Union); <b>Hendricks</b> (Howard); <b>Krumm</b> (Jasper); <b>Little Wall</b> (Hamilton); <b>Lost Grove</b> (Scott); <b>Mill Creek</b> (O'Brien); <b>Pleasant Creek</b> (Linn); <b>Smith</b> (Kossuth); and <b>South Prairie</b> (Black Hawk)
B. Catch and release only at lakes <b>Brown</b> (Jackson) and <b>Wapello</b> (Davis)
C. All 12 to 16-inch fish must be immediately released at <b>Lake Hawthorn</b> (Mahaska)
D. All 12 to 18-inch fish must be immediately released at <b>Lake Sugema</b> (Van Buren)
<b>Interior Streams &amp; River Impoundments</b>
Length Limits - 12-inch minimum except all Black Bass caught from the following stream segments must be released alive immediately:
A. <b>Cedar River</b> (Mitchell) extending downstream from the bridge on county road A19 east of Otranto as posted to the bridge on county road T26 south of St. Ansgar
B. <b>Maquoketa River</b> (Delaware) extending downstream from below Lake Delhi Dam as posted to the first county gravel road bridge
C. <b>Middle Raccoon River</b> (Guthrie) extending downstream from below Lake Panorama Dam as posted to the dam at Redfield
D. <b>Upper Iowa River</b> (Winneshiek) extending downstream from the Fifth Street bridge in Decorah as posted to the upper dam
<b>Boundary Rivers<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limit:</b> Boundary Rivers - combined daily 5 and possession of 10
Length Limits - 14-inch minimum on the <b>Mississippi River</b> and 12-inch minimum length limit on the <b>Missouri River</b> . Associated chutes and backwaters of the border rivers are included where intermittent or constant flow occur. No length limit on the <b>Big Sioux River</b> . <b>Browns Lake Mississippi River</b> (Jackson) is catch and release only.

<b>Bluegill, Crappie &amp; Pumpkinseed</b>
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous
<b>Length Limits:</b> All waters - None
<b>Daily Bag and Possession Limits</b>
<b>Inland waters<sup>1</sup></b> - 25 daily for Bluegill and 25 daily for crappie on public waters and no possession limit for either. No daily limit for Bluegill or crappie on private waters. See p. 16 for boundary lakes.
<b>Boundary rivers<sup>2</sup></b> - Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers - None. Mississippi River and connected backwaters; Bluegill and Pumpkinseed combined daily bag limit of 25 and possession limit of 50; crappie daily bag limit of 25 and possession limit of 50.

### Wildlife Violator Compact

Iowa is part of the agreement between participating states that prohibits a person whose hunting or fishing privileges are suspended in one state from participating in those activities in another state.

**Catfish** Channel, Blue, Flathead Catfish combined & bullhead

**Season:** All waters - Continuous

**Length Limits:** All waters - None

**Catfish Daily Bag & Possession Limits**

**Inland lakes** - Catfish combined daily 8 and possession 30, except for Iowa boundary lakes listed on p. 16. No limit for bullheads.

**Inland streams, Coralville, Rathbun, Red Rock and Saylorville Reservoirs** - Catfish combined daily 15 and combined possession 30. No limit for bullheads.

**Boundary rivers**<sup>2</sup> same as streams except no bag or possession limit on the Mississippi River

**Frogs**, except for the endangered crawfish frog

**Season:** All waters - Continuous

**Length Limits:** All waters - None

**Daily Bag & Possession Limits:** All waters - All frogs except bullfrogs and crawfish frogs combined daily: 48 and possession: 96. Bullfrogs combined daily and possession: 12. Crawfish frogs are protected as an endangered species. See p. 4.

**Muskellunge** including Hybrids (Tiger) (Identification p. 14)

**Season:** All waters - Continuous except there is an open season on West Okoboji, East Okoboji and Spirit Lakes (Dickinson County) and on Iowa-Minnesota boundary lakes from **May 21 through Nov. 30**, each year.

**Length Limits:** All waters - 40 inches minimum length limit

**Daily Bag & Possession Limits:** All waters - Daily and possession of 1.

**Mussels** All mussels except for those listed as threatened or endangered (p. 4) and the Zebra Mussel (p. 19). The angler is responsible for the identification of the mussel species in possession.

**Season:** All waters - Continuous but the taking of mussels is restricted to the hours between sunrise and sunset.

**Length Limit:** All waters - None

**Daily Bag & Possession Limit:** Inland waters<sup>1</sup>, Missouri River and Big Sioux River - Only dead shells may be harvested. Mississippi River and connected backwaters, live and dead shells may be harvested. The possession limit for all waters is 24 whole mussels or 48 shell halves. See p. 7 "Mussel Taking."

**Northern Pike** (Identification p. 14)

**Season:** All waters - Continuous

**Length Limit:** All waters - None

**Daily Bag & Possession Limit**

**Inland waters**<sup>1</sup> - Daily of 3 and possession of 6. For **boundary lakes**, see p. 16.

**Boundary rivers**<sup>2</sup> - Daily of 5 and possession of 10 on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and a daily of 6 and possession of 12 on the Big Sioux River.

**Catch and Release Tips**

Every angler should be prepared to release some of their catch. Whether you are practicing catch and release by choice or to comply with regulations, it is necessary to release the fish quickly. The less you handle, touch or hold the fish the better. It's best to leave the fish in the water while you unhook it. Use needle-nose pliers to gently remove the hook from the fish's mouth. If the fish is hooked deeply, cut the line as close as possible to the fish's mouth and leave the hook.

## Paddlefish

**Season:** Continuous open season on all interior waters, **except** you cannot snag in areas closed to snagging (p. 8). The open season on the Mississippi River is **March 1 through April 15**. Snagging for Paddlefish on the Mississippi River is restricted to the area within 500 yards below the navigation dams and their spillways. The open season on the Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers is **Feb. 1 through April 30**. The open area is limited to Iowa waters only on the Missouri River and the portion of the Big Sioux River along the Iowa and South Dakota border, starting at the Big Sioux River below the I-29 bridge to the Big Sioux River's confluence with the Missouri River and in the Missouri River, including all backwater and sloughs and any Missouri River tributary starting at its confluence and extending below its I-29 bridge, starting at the Big Sioux River confluence and extending to the Hamburg Landing boat ramp. Snagging hours on the Big Sioux and Missouri Rivers is sunrise to sunset. You cannot use hooks larger than 5/0 treble or measuring more than 1-1/4 inch long when two of the hook points are placed on a ruler (p. 8).

**Length Limits:** None, **except** for the Mississippi River where there is a 33-inch maximum length limit; and on the Big Sioux and Missouri Rivers, there is a 35-45-inch protected slot limit. You must immediately release alive all fish measuring 33 inches or more on the Mississippi River and 35-45 inches on the Big Sioux and Missouri Rivers. Measure the length of a Paddlefish from the front of the eye to the natural unaltered fork of the tail. (See illustration below). Use a flexible tape to measure along and over the center line contour of the fish while it is lying flat. You must immediately release alive all fish you do not take into possession.

**Daily Bag & Possession Limit: All waters** - daily of 2 and possession of 4 except on the Big Sioux River, Missouri River and any Missouri River tributary to its I-29 bridge where you can buy up to 2 paddlefish tags each year. You can take 1 paddlefish with each paddlefish tag.

### Big Sioux & Missouri Rivers Special License and Regulations:

You must have a valid resident or nonresident fishing license in addition to the Paddlefish fishing license with unused tag(s) to fish for Paddlefish in the Big Sioux and Missouri Rivers. Residents and nonresidents under 16 years of age must have a Paddlefish fishing license and unused tag(s) to fish for Paddlefish. Licenses are available first come, first served - 950 resident licenses and 50 nonresident licenses are available each year. You can buy up to two tags per year - one from **Dec. 15 to Dec. 31** and an additional tag from **Jan. 1 to Jan. 7**, or two tags if you didn't buy one in December. To buy a license, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/fishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing). Anglers with a Paddlefish fishing license and unused tag(s) can snag fish to catch Paddlefish and rough fish (see p. 8 for list). You cannot use a gaffe hook or other penetrating device to help land a snagged fish. Once you have caught and tagged a Paddlefish, you must stop snagging. Immediately upon taking into possession a legal Paddlefish, attach the valid current year transportation tag issued with the license to the fish's lower jaw in a way that it cannot be removed without mutilating or destroying it. A damaged tag or closed tag not attached to a Paddlefish is no longer valid. You cannot possess a Paddlefish fishing license or transportation tag issued to another angler, or tag a Paddlefish with a transportation tag issued to another angler. The transportation tag must be attached before you can move the carcass from the place of harvest and remain attached to the Paddlefish until it is processed for consumption. The Paddlefish must remain intact except for the snout in front of the eye until the fish reaches the final processing place. The "final processing place" is defined as the angler's residence or the location where consumption occurs. The transportation tag is proof of possession of the carcass by the licensee.

## Shovelnose Sturgeon (Identification p. 15)

**Season: All waters** - Continuous except no harvest allowed in Big Sioux River.

**Length Limit: All waters** - None

**Daily Bag & Possession Limits: All waters** - None, except the daily bag limit is 10 and possession limit is 20 in the Missouri River. You cannot sell eggs with a sport fishing license.

## How to Measure a Paddlefish and Shovelnose Sturgeon

Correct Measurement

### Measuring a Paddlefish

Measure from the front of the eye to the unaltered fork in the tail.

### Measuring a Shovelnose Sturgeon

Measure from the tip of the snout to the unaltered fork in the tail.



<b>Threatened and Endangered Species</b> (p. 4)
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Closed
<b>Trout</b> Brook, Brown and Rainbow (Identification p. 15)
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous
<b>Length Limits:</b> None, except a 14-inch minimum length limit for all trout in <b>Spring Branch</b> (Delaware), from the spring source to County Hwy. D5X as posted, and on Brown Trout only in portions of <b>Bloody Run Creek</b> (Clayton) where posted.
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession:</b> All waters - Combined daily of 5 and possession of 10.
<b>Catch &amp; Release Only:</b> You must release alive immediately all trout caught from the posted portion of <b>Hewett and Ensign Creeks; McCloud Run; and Waterloo Creek;</b> and Brown Trout caught from <b>French Creek and West Fork of French Creek;</b> and Brook Trout caught from <b>Casey Springs, Falcon Springs Pine Spring Creek and South Pine Creek.</b>
<b>Artificial Lure Only:</b> You can only use artificial lures in the posted areas of <b>Bloody Run Creek, Ensign Creek and Hewett Creek (Ensign Hollow), French Creek, McCloud Run, South Pine Creek, Spring Branch, Waterloo Creek, Casey Springs, Falcon Springs and Pine Spring Creek.</b> Artificial lures don't contain or have added to them natural or human-made substances made to attract fish by taste or smell.
<b>Turtles</b> Common Snapping, Spiny Softshell, Smooth Softshell and Painted
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous for common snapping turtles; Open season for spiny softshell, smooth softshell and painted turtles is from <b>July 16, 2026 to May 14, 2027.</b>
<b>Length Limits:</b> None
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession:</b> Daily of 4 common snapping, 1 spiny softshell or smooth softshell, 1 painted and possession of a maximum of 100 pounds of live turtles or 50 pounds of dressed turtles; the daily catch limit cannot exceed the possession limit.
<b>Walleye, Sauger &amp; Saugeye</b> (Identification p. 14)
<b>Inland Waters</b>
<b>Season:</b> Continuous except on West Okoboji Lake, East Okoboji Lake and Spirit Lake (Dickinson). The open season on West Okoboji Lake, East Okoboji Lake and Spirit Lake is from <b>May 2, 2026 through Feb. 14, 2027.</b>
<b>Length Limit:</b> None except for the special lakes which are posted or published below.
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limit:</b> Combined daily 5 and combined possession limit of 10, except for special lakes listed below and boundary lakes listed on p. 16.
<b>Special Walleye Restrictions:</b> The lakes listed below have a daily bag limit of 3 and possession limit of 6, except for Lake Rathbun, in addition to special length restrictions. <b>Big Creek Lake</b> (Polk) 15-inch minimum length limit, and no more than one Walleye longer than 20-inches may be taken per day <b>Clear Lake</b> (Cerro Gordo) immediately release alive all 17- to 22-inch Walleyes; no more than one Walleye longer than 22-inches may be taken per day <b>Lake Rathbun</b> (Appanoose) 15-inch minimum length limit; daily bag limit of 5 and possession limit of 10 <b>Storm Lake</b> (Buena Vista) and <b>West Okoboji Lake, East Okoboji Lake, Spirit Lake, Upper Gar, Minnewashta, Lower Gar</b> (Dickinson) immediately release alive all 19 to 25-inch Walleyes; no more than one Walleye longer than 25-inches may be taken per day
<b>Boundary Rivers<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Season:</b> Continuous
<b>Length Limit:</b> None, except a 15-inch minimum length limit applies to Walleye on all pools of the Mississippi River. In addition, on the Mississippi River you must immediately release alive all walleye from 20 to 27-inches and no more than one Walleye above 27-inches may be taken per day.
<b>DAILY BAG &amp; POSSESSION LIMIT:</b> Combined daily 5 and combined limit of 10, except for Mississippi River combined daily 6 and combined possession of 12 and on Big Sioux and Missouri rivers - combined daily of 4 and possession of 8.

<b>Yellow Bass, White Bass, Rock Bass &amp; Hybrid (Wiper)</b>
<b>Season:</b> All waters <sup>1</sup> - Continuous
<b>Length Limit:</b> All waters - None
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limits:</b>
Inland waters <sup>1</sup> - None
<b>Boundary rivers</b> <sup>2</sup> Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers - None. Mississippi River and connected backwaters; daily bag limit of 25 and possession limit of 50 for each of the following: White and Yellow bass combined, and Rock Bass.

<b>Yellow Perch</b>
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous
<b>Length Limit:</b> All waters - None
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limits:</b> All waters - Daily of 25 and possession of 50 except there is no daily or possession limit on the Missouri River. For <b>Boundary lakes</b> , see p. 16.

<b>All Other Fish</b>
<b>Season:</b> All waters - Continuous
<b>Length Limits:</b> All waters - None
<b>Daily Bag &amp; Possession Limits:</b> All waters - None

<sup>1</sup> **Inland waters** of the state include all interior lakes and streams including: Green Island Lake and Slough (Jackson), Middle and Upper Sabula (Jackson) and Lake Odessa (Louisa).

<sup>2</sup> **Boundary rivers** of the state include the Mississippi, Missouri, Des Moines (Van Buren and Lee) and Big Sioux and their backwater lakes and sloughs.

Visit the DNR fisheries website at [www.iowadnr.gov/fishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing) to find out more about Iowa fish and fishing. Looking for information on hunting, boating and camping? Go to [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

**IOWA'S FISHING ATLAS**  
**MOBILE-FRIENDLY**  
[WWW.IOWADNR.GOV/FISHING](http://WWW.IOWADNR.GOV/FISHING)

- Updated to include DNR managed lakes, community fishing ponds and hundreds of miles of Iowa rivers
- Sync with your current GPS location to find specific lake contours, fish structures and amenities
- Create a custom map with new print tool

## Fish Identification

### Walleye & Sauger

You need to know the difference between Walleye and Sauger due to differences in length limits.

#### Walleye

Walleye have a white tip on the lower tail fin; do not have distinct blotches or mottling on the sides; forward (spiny) portion of the dorsal fin has dark streaks or blotches instead of distinct black spots.



Photo courtesy of Jim Negus, [www.tnfish.org](http://www.tnfish.org)

#### Sauger

Sauger do not have a white tip on the lower tail fin; back is crossed with several darker saddles or blotches extending down on both sides; distinct black spots on the forward (spiny) portion of the dorsal fin are aligned in rows.



Photo courtesy of Jim Negus, [www.tnfish.org](http://www.tnfish.org)

### Iowa's Pike Family

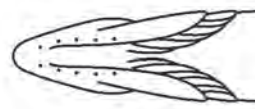
Lakes and streams may contain Muskellunge and Northern Pike. It is important to know the difference among members of the pike family to obey appropriate size, catch and possession limits.

#### Northern Pike

Normally a bluish-green to gray on the back with irregular rows of light-colored horizontal bean-shaped spots on the sides. There are five or fewer pores on each side of the lower jaw. The entire cheek and upper half of the gill cover is scaled.



Muskellunge 6 to 8 pores per side



Pike up to 5 pores per side

#### Muskellunge

Usually are olive to dark gray with tiger-like vertical markings on the side. They have 6 to 8 pores on each side of the lower jaw. Only the upper half of both the cheek and gill cover is scaled.



## Trout

### Rainbow Trout

Olive to greenish-blue above and silvery below with a prominent horizontal red band on the side. There are many small, dark spots on the body, dorsal fin and tail.



### Brown Trout

Olive to greenish-brown. The large black and reddish-orange spots on the sides of the fish have a pale border. The lower portions of the fish are yellow, fading to gray or white beneath. Browns have few or no spots on the tail fin.



### Brook Trout

Vivid white markings on the front edges of the lower fins. They also have light “worm-like” markings on the back. General color: olive to gray-green.



## Sturgeon

### Lake Sturgeon

**Endangered: If caught, release immediately, unharmed.**

- Short snout turns up at end
- Barbels are not fringed



### Pallid Sturgeon

**Endangered: If caught, release immediately, unharmed.**

- Outer barbels twice as long as inner barbels
- Base of barbels “U” shaped, inner two set out in front
- Smooth belly



### Shovelnose Sturgeon

- Barbels all the same length
- Barbels straight across
- Rarely exceeds 4 pounds
- Belly is scaled



*Sturgeon images are courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation.*

## License Agreements with Bordering States

Fish privileges on boundary waters common to Iowa and a bordering state are mutually agreed upon by the neighboring states. You can fish boundary waters common to Iowa with a valid fishing license, but it is your responsibility to know which state you are fishing in and the regulations for the water that you are fishing. (See the following table).

A resident or nonresident with a valid Iowa fishing license	Mississippi River		Missouri River Nebraska	Big Sioux River South Dakota	Des Moines River Missouri <sup>3</sup>	Border Lakes Minnesota
	Wisconsin <sup>1</sup>	Illinois				
May hook and line fish only		X		X		
May hook and line fish, spear and archery fish			X		X	X <sup>4</sup>
May hook and line fish, spear and take minnows and crayfish for such fishing	X					
May fish all sloughs and backwaters connected with the main channel	X	X	X <sup>2</sup>		X <sup>3</sup>	
May fish from a boat or the bank of either state	X		X	X		X
May <b>not</b> fish from or attach any device or equipment to the main bank of the state where you are <b>not</b> licensed, cannot fish any tributary		X			X	
Must comply with the regulations of the state in which you are fishing	X					
When fishing in water in which you are <b>not</b> licensed you must comply with the state having the more restrictive regulations.		X	X	X	X	X <sup>4</sup>

**<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin-Iowa** - You only can fish in the waters of the Mississippi River lying between the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad tracks on the Iowa side of the river and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad tracks lying on the Wisconsin side of the river.

**<sup>2</sup>Nebraska-Iowa** - Waters of the Missouri River include all oxbows, sloughs, chutes and backwaters that draw water from the Missouri River proper. Included are any oxbows, chutes and backwaters separated from the river but through which the Iowa-Nebraska state line passes. In Desoto Bend Lake, you must obey federal refuge regulations.

**<sup>3</sup>Missouri-Iowa** - Included are any oxbow lakes separated from the river but through which the Iowa-Missouri state line passes.

**<sup>4</sup>Minnesota-Iowa** - boundary lakes include Little Spirit Lake (Dickinson), Iowa Lake (Osceola), Burt (Swag) Lake (Kossuth), and Iowa and Tuttle (Okamanpeedan) Lakes (Emmet). The following species have a continuous open season with a daily bag and possession limit set forth below: Walleye, Northern Pike and in combination Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass daily bag and possession limit three. There is no length limit for bass. Channel Catfish daily bag and possession limit eight. Crappie species and sunfish species (Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Green Sunfish, Orangespotted Sunfish, Longear Sunfish, Warmouth and hybrids) in aggregate, bag and possession limit 25. Muskellunge daily bag and possession limit one with an open season beginning May 21 through November 30 and a 40-inch minimum length limit shall apply on all border lakes. Spearing or archery may be used to take carp, buffalo, Bowfin, Freshwater Drum, gar and Quillback Carpsucker. All species not listed above are subject to the inland regulations of the state and have a continuous open season.


## Health Advisories for Eating Iowa Caught Fish

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [www.EPA.gov/fishadvice](http://www.EPA.gov/fishadvice), the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), [www.FDA.gov/fishadvice](http://www.FDA.gov/fishadvice), and Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recommend eating fish weekly as part of a healthy diet. Iowa DNR biologists have collected tissue samples from thousands of Iowa fish and submitted them for laboratory analyses to monitor for common contaminants. These results show that most fish in Iowa are safe to eat; however, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) can occur in trace amounts in some Iowa fish.

Mercury levels in Iowa fish are safe for most Iowans, and in most cases are lower than store bought fish. Pregnant women, women wanting to become pregnant, breastfeeding mothers, and children under 12 years of age should monitor their fish consumption to ensure they are selecting fish that are low in mercury.

### ADVICE ABOUT EATING IOWA CAUGHT FISH

For Women Who Might Become or Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding and Children Ages 0–11 Years

What is a serving? As a guide, use the palm of your hand. 

BEST CHOICES EAT 2-3 SERVINGS A WEEK Smaller than (<)	GOOD CHOICES EAT 1 SERVING A WEEK Bigger than (>)																												
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Bluegill</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Sauger &lt; 15"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Channel Catfish &lt; 24"</td> <td>Shovelnose Sturgeon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Common Carp</td> <td>Smallmouth Bass &lt; 13"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crappie Species (All)</td> <td>Trout Species (All)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flathead Catfish &lt; 18"</td> <td>Walleye &lt; 19"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Freshwater Drum &lt; 17"</td> <td>White Bass &lt; 15"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hybrid Striped Bass &lt; 20"</td> <td>Yellow Bass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Largemouth Bass &lt; 13"</td> <td>Yellow Perch</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paddlefish</td> <td>All Turtles</td> </tr> </table>	Bluegill	Sauger < 15"	Channel Catfish < 24"	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Common Carp	Smallmouth Bass < 13"	Crappie Species (All)	Trout Species (All)	Flathead Catfish < 18"	Walleye < 19"	Freshwater Drum < 17"	White Bass < 15"	Hybrid Striped Bass < 20"	Yellow Bass	Largemouth Bass < 13"	Yellow Perch	Paddlefish	All Turtles	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Channel Catfish &gt; 24"</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Northern Pike</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flathead Catfish &gt; 18"</td> <td>Shorthead Redhorse</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Freshwater Drum &gt; 17"</td> <td>Smallmouth Bass &gt; 13"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hybrid Striped Bass &gt; 20"</td> <td>Walleye &gt; 19"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Largemouth Bass &gt; 13"</td> <td>White Bass &gt; 15"</td> </tr> </table>	Channel Catfish > 24"	Northern Pike	Flathead Catfish > 18"	Shorthead Redhorse	Freshwater Drum > 17"	Smallmouth Bass > 13"	Hybrid Striped Bass > 20"	Walleye > 19"	Largemouth Bass > 13"	White Bass > 15"
Bluegill	Sauger < 15"																												
Channel Catfish < 24"	Shovelnose Sturgeon																												
Common Carp	Smallmouth Bass < 13"																												
Crappie Species (All)	Trout Species (All)																												
Flathead Catfish < 18"	Walleye < 19"																												
Freshwater Drum < 17"	White Bass < 15"																												
Hybrid Striped Bass < 20"	Yellow Bass																												
Largemouth Bass < 13"	Yellow Perch																												
Paddlefish	All Turtles																												
Channel Catfish > 24"	Northern Pike																												
Flathead Catfish > 18"	Shorthead Redhorse																												
Freshwater Drum > 17"	Smallmouth Bass > 13"																												
Hybrid Striped Bass > 20"	Walleye > 19"																												
Largemouth Bass > 13"	White Bass > 15"																												
<b>CHOICES TO AVOID HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS</b>																													
Muskellunge																													

STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF

Health AND Human

SERVICES

[www.iowadnr.gov/fishadvice](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishadvice)

IOWA | DNR

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tested fish at two locations in Iowa exceeded Iowa's risk based advisory levels for polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels. These advisory levels were set by DHHS based on EPA and FDA guidance. All Iowans should not eat more than 1 meal per week of the fish from these areas:

Species and Size	River Reach or Lake
Channel Catfish (all sizes)	McKinley Lake (Union County)
Common Carp (greater than 20 inches)	Mississippi River, Pool 15 at Davenport (Scott County)

## Protect Our Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are animals and plants that are not native to Iowa. When introduced into Iowa waters, they can displace native plants and animals, damage water resources and interfere with water-based recreation, including fishing.

These species can be introduced and spread through a variety of activities including boating, fishing, aquarium ownership, and water gardening.

A partial list of Iowa waters with aquatic invasive species is available on page 19. Find a complete list online at [www.iowadnr.gov/ais](http://www.iowadnr.gov/ais). If you find a possible aquatic invasive species, please report it to [kim.bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:kim.bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov).

### Invasive species threatening Iowa:

**Fish:** Bighead Carp,\* Black Carp,\* Round Goby,\* Rudd,\* Ruffe,\* Silver Carp,\* Snakehead,\* White Perch\*

**Invertebrate:** Fishhook Waterflea,\* Marbled Crayfish, New Zealand Mudsail,\* Quagga Mussel,\* Red Swamp Crayfish, Rusty Crayfish,\* Spiny Waterflea,\* Zebra Mussel\*

**Plant:** Brittle Naiad (Water nymph),\* Brazilian Waterweed, Curlyleaf Pondweed,\* Eurasian Watermilfoil,\* Flowering Rush,\* Hydrilla,\* Parrot Feather, Purple Loosestrife,\* Saltcedar,\* Starry Stonewort, Water Hyacinth, Water Lettuce, Water Spinach,\* Yellow Floating-Heart

**\*Prohibited in Iowa**

## Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations

You cannot possess, introduce, buy, sell or transport aquatic invasive species in Iowa except when a species is being removed from watercraft and equipment at a water access, is caught and immediately killed or returned to the water from which it came, or is being transported in a sealed container for identification purposes.

**Do your part; help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species.  
IT'S THE LAW!**



Photo courtesy of Wildlife Forever

- **CLEAN** any plants, animals, or mud from your boat and equipment before you leave a waterbody.
- **DRAIN** water from all equipment (motor, live well, bilge, transom well, ballast system) before you leave a waterbody. Drain plugs must be removed at the water access and remain open during transport.
- **DRY** anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, boots, clothing, dogs). Before transporting to another waterbody either: Spray your boat and trailer with hot, high-pressure water; or Dry your boat and equipment for at least five days.
- Never release plants, fish, or animals into a waterbody unless they came out of that waterbody. Empty unwanted bait in the trash.



## STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Be A Good Steward. Clean. Drain. Dry.

[StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](http://StopAquaticHitchhikers.org)

Waterbody Name	Bighead Carp	Brittle Naiad	Curlyleaf Pondweed	Eurasian Watermilfoil	Rusty Crawfish	Silver Carp	Zebra Mussel
Big Creek Lake (Polk)		x	x		x		
Big Sioux River (Woodbury)	x						
Black Hawk Lake (Sac)		x					x
Brushy Creek Lake (Webster)		x	x	x			
Carter Lake (Pottawattamie)			x	x			
Cedar River	x				x	x	
Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo)			x	x			x
Crystal Lake (Hancock)			x	x			x
Des Moines River	x					x	x
East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson)			x	x			x
Easter Lake (Polk)		x	x				
George Wyth Lake (Black Hawk)		x		x			
Grundy County Lake (Grundy)		x	x	x			
Iowa River	x					x	
Lake Cornelia (Wright)			x				x
Lake Macbride (Johnson)		x	x				
Lake Manawa (Pottawattamie)							x
Lake Miami (Monroe)		x					
Lake Wapello (Davis)		x					
Little Sioux River	x					x	x
Lost Grove Lake (Scott)			x	x			
Lost Island Lake (Palo Alto)				x			x
Mississippi River	x	x		x		x	x
Missouri River	x					x	x
Pleasant Creek Lake (Linn)		x	x				
Prairie Rose Lake (Shelby)		x	x				
Red Haw Lake (Lucas)			x				
Red Rock Reservoir (Marion)							x
Saylorville Reservoir (Polk)							x
Skunk River	x					x	
Storm Lake (Buena Vista)					x		x
Three Mile Lake (Union)			x				
Twelve Mile Creek Lake (Union)			x				
Union Grove Lake (Tama)			x				
Upper Gar Lake			x	x			x
Wapsipinicon River					x	x	
West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson)	x	x	x	x		x	x
Willow Lake (Harrison)		x	x				

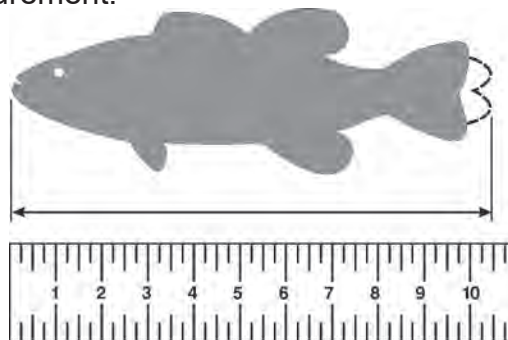
## Length Limits

Length limits are an important tool in fish management. Length limits are used in Iowa to protect important predator species such as bass, Walleye, Muskellunge and trout from overharvest.

Length limits are also used to provide larger quality-size fish to catch. Length limits are not the cure-all to better fishing. Improved fishing opportunities exist where anglers obey the law and return fish outside the length limit unharmed to grow and be caught again.

## How to Measure a Fish

Measure total length from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail with the fish laid flat, mouth closed and tail lobes pressed together. See p. 11 for Paddlefish and Shovelnose Sturgeon measurement.



## Estimate Fish Weight

Estimate the weight of a released fish with the following formula: sunfish, Walleye, Northern Pike, Muskellunge and Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass, take the length in inches and multiply it by itself 3 times.

Divide that total by the following number for each species: sunfish, divide by 1,200; Walleye, divide by 2,700; Northern Pike and Muskellunge divide by 3,500; Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass, divide by 1,600; catfish, divide by 3,300.

For example, a 20-inch Largemouth Bass.

First multiply  $20 \times 20 \times 20$  ( $20 \times 20 = 400$ ,  $20 \times 400 = 8,000$ ) then divide  $8,000$  by  $1,600 = 5$

You have just released a **5-pound** Largemouth Bass!

For trout, multiply the girth (distance around the body) by itself and then multiply that value by the fish's length and divide by 800.

## Fisheries Offices Phone Numbers

DNR Central Office - Des Moines _____	515-725-8200
Community Fishing Program _____	515-344-6960
Bellevue Fisheries Station _____	563-872-4976
Big Spring Hatchery _____	563-245-2446
Black Hawk Station _____	712-657-2638
Boone Research Station _____	641-891-3795
Chariton Research Station _____	641-774-2958
Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery _____	563-382-8324
Clear Lake Station _____	641-357-3517
Fairport Fish Hatchery _____	563-263-5062
Guttenberg Fisheries Station _____	563-252-1156
Lake Darling Regional Office _____	319-694-2430
Lake Macbride Station _____	319-624-3615
Manchester Fish Hatchery _____	563-927-3276
Mississippi Monitoring Station _____	563-872-5495
Mount Ayr Fish Hatchery _____	641-464-3108
Rathbun Fish Hatchery _____	641-647-2406
Southwest Regional Office _____	712-769-2587
Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery _____	712-336-1840

## Poaching is A Crime!

If you see or know of a fish or wildlife violation, report it to TIP as soon as possible by calling **1-800-532-2020**.



Provide as much information as possible when you call, such as a description of the individual, vehicle and the time and location of the violation.

A conservation officer will be sent to investigate. Since the TIP program began in 1985, about \$290,000 has been approved in reward payments.

**Turn In Poachers**  
**1-800-532-2020**

or online at

**[www.iowadnr.gov/fishregs](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishregs)**

**You can remain anonymous!**

## First Fish Award

Catch a memory when your favorite young angler hooks their first fish! It's easy and free to participate! Apply for a first fish certificate online at [www.iowadnr.gov/firstfish](http://www.iowadnr.gov/firstfish). Print the certificate yourself from an electronic file posted online or request a printed certificate. Species, size of the fish or age of the angler is not important, only that it be the first fish that the angler has successfully landed.



## Master Angler Award



The Iowa DNR recognizes memorable-sized catches for more than 40 fish species in Iowa. A Master Angler award certificate and car/boat decal will be sent for each qualifying entry. Silver and gold levels will also receive a medallion.

Apply online at [www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler](http://www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler).

### Master Angler Award Rules

- All entries must include both a photo of the angler with their catch and a photo of the catch on a flat surface next to a standard ruler or measuring tape to verify length. Make sure the measurement is clearly visible. Entries submitted without a length photo will be rejected. Learn more about length photo requirements on the Master Angler webpage.
- Fish must meet the minimum species length (p. 22).
- Length is measured from tip of the snout to the tip of the tail (p. 20), except paddlefish, which are measured from the front of the eye to the fork in the tail and sturgeon which are measured from the snout to the fork in the tail (p.11). If there is some doubt about species identification, contact the nearest DNR personnel for verification.
- Any fish believed to be a new state record must be verified by a DNR Fisheries official.
- The fish can be released and still qualify for an award.
- You must have a valid Iowa fishing license and fish must be caught by legal methods according to Iowa law.

### Which Level Will You Achieve?

1. **Species Specialist** - catch five of the same species meeting the minimum length criteria listed on p. 22.
2. **Master Angler** - catch one fish meeting the minimum length criteria listed on p. 22.
3. **Silver Master Angler** – catch five different species meeting the minimum length criteria listed on p. 22.
4. **Gold Master Angler** - catch ten different species meeting the minimum length criteria listed on p. 22.

Your name and Master Angler fish will appear at the time your registration is processed on the Master Angler website at [www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler](http://www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler).

**Please Note:** Master Angler certificates will be mailed automatically, unless Species Specialist level has been achieved. At that time, no other certificates or decals will be mailed for that particular species. Only one lifetime award will be given for each Silver and Gold Master Angler level achieved. If your certificate gets damaged or lost, you can print it from the link sent in the approval email. Your entry will be added to your account and Master Angler Ranking webpage.



**Silver Master Angler**  
Five different qualifying species



**Gold Master Angler**  
Ten different qualifying species

## Master Angler Eligible Species

### Minimum Lengths

Bass (Hybrid Striped)	24"	Goldeye/Mooneye	15"
Bass (Largemouth)	20"	Muskellunge	45"
Bass (Rock)	8"	Northern Pike	35"
Bass (Smallmouth)	20"	Paddlefish	40"
Bass (Spotted)	15"	Perch (Yellow)	12"
Bass (White)	17"	Sauger	20"
Bass (Yellow)	10"	Saugeye	25"
Bowfin (Dogfish)	26"	Sturgeon (Shovelnose)	26"
Buffalo (Bigmouth)	32"	Sucker (Blue)	27"
Buffalo (Black)	32"	Sucker (white or spotted)	18"
Buffalo (Smallmouth)	26"	Sucker (Northern Hog)	16"
Bullhead (species)	15"	Sucker (Carp sucker sp.)	22"
Carp (Common)	32"	Sucker (Redhorse sp.)	22"
Catfish (Blue)	40"	Sunfish (Bluegill)	10"
Catfish (Channel)	30"	Sunfish (Green)	10"
Catfish (Flathead)	35"	Sunfish (Pumpkinseed)	9"
Crappie (Black)	14"	Sunfish (Redear)	11"
Crappie (Hybrid)	14"	Sunfish (Warmouth)	7"
Crappie (White)	14"	Trout (Brook)	15"
Freshwater Drum	25"	Trout (Brown)	18"
Gar (Longnose)	45"	Trout (Rainbow)	18"
Gar (Shortnose)	26"	Walleye	26"

### State Record Fish

A new all-time state record will be recognized only if the weight of the fish exceeds one ounce or more than the weight of the previous state record for that species or recognized hybrid. DNR fisheries personnel must examine and verify all new state record fish. One witness must verify the weight of the fish to the nearest ounce on scales legal for trade. All-time records are posted until broken.

Find a list of current state record fish online at [www.iowadnr.gov/recordfish](http://www.iowadnr.gov/recordfish).

Find more information on lengths and species at [www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler](http://www.iowadnr.gov/masterangler).

### Reasonable Accommodations & Alternative Formats

If you need accommodations to access the DNR's programs or services because of a disability, requests may be made by contacting your local field office or the department's ADA coordinator at 515-725-8200. This information is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting the DNR at 515-725-8200. TTY users - Contact Relay Iowa at 800-735-2942.

### PUBLIC NONDISCRIMINATION & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Federal and State law prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, mental and/or physical disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in employment and public accommodation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416 or DNR's Civil Rights Coordinators at [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov).

This agency receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility on these bases, or if you desire further information, please contact DNR's Civil Rights Coordinators at [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov) or write to:

#### Office of Civil Rights

U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

# Conservation Officers

County	Officer	Cell Phone	County	Officer	Cell Phone
<b>Adair</b>	Adam Gacke .....	712-250-0303	<b>Johnson</b>	Erika Billerbeck .....	319-330-9710
<b>Adams</b>	Andrea Bevington .....	712-520-0508		Brad Baker .....	319-430-1630
<b>Allamakee</b>	Rylan Retallick .....	563-880-0108	<b>Jones</b>	Lucas Dever .....	319-480-0397
<b>Appanoose</b>	Adam Arnold .....	641-777-2164	<b>Keokuk</b>	Wesley Gould .....	641-660-3441
	Dallas Davis .....	641-777-2163	<b>Kossuth</b>	Mitch Anderson .....	712-260-1003
<b>Audubon</b>	Jeremy King .....	712-250-0061	<b>Lee</b>	Andrew Kuckler .....	319-470-0788
<b>Benton</b>	Brett Reece (west 1/2) .....	641-751-0931	<b>Linn</b>	Travis Graves .....	319-350-2863
	Ron Lane (east 1/2) .....	319-350-2871		Ron Lane .....	319-350-2871
<b>Black Hawk</b>	Lynn Koch .....	319-240-5034	<b>Louisa</b>	Joe Fourdyce .....	563-260-1225
<b>Boone</b>	Jeffrey Barnes .....	515-290-4907	<b>Lucas</b>	Kyle Jensen .....	641-414-2175
	Brandon Bergquist .....	515-290-0177	<b>Lyon</b>	Tait Anderson .....	712-260-1006
<b>Bremer</b>	Lynn Koch .....	319-240-5034	<b>Madison</b>	Craig Lonneman .....	515-238-5005
	Chris Jones .....	319-939-4448	<b>Mahaska</b>	John Steinbach .....	641-660-0741
<b>Buchanan</b>	Dakota Drish .....	563-920-0566	<b>Marion</b>	Eric Hoffman .....	641-891-2004
<b>Buena Vista</b>	Brent Koppie .....	712-260-1010		Ken Kenyon .....	641-891-1246
<b>Butler</b>	Jordon Hansen .....	319-240-8033	<b>Marshall</b>	Austin Dollen .....	641-751-5246
<b>Calhoun</b>	Nathan Hauptert .....	712-330-8462	<b>Mills</b>	Richard Price .....	712-520-0121
<b>Carroll</b>	Aron Arthur .....	515-370-0422	<b>Mitchell</b>	Jacob Fulk .....	319-240-9174
<b>Cass</b>	Adam Gacke .....	712-250-0303	<b>Monona</b>	Katherine Hoepfner .....	712-420-1486
<b>Cedar</b>	Eric Wright .....	319-530-6121	<b>Monroe</b>	Dallas Davis .....	641-777-2163
<b>Cerro Gordo</b>	Matt Washburn .....	641-425-0822		Adam Arnold .....	641-777-2164
	Ben Schlader .....	641-425-0828	<b>Montgomery</b>	Todd Carrick .....	712-520-0507
<b>Cherokee</b>	Brent Koppie (east 1/2) .....	712-260-1010	<b>Muscatine</b>	Derrick Slutts .....	563-260-1223
	Chad Morrow (west 1/2) .....	712-260-1023	<b>O'Brien</b>	Joe Yarkosky (east 1/2) .....	712-260-1004
<b>Chickasaw</b>	Marc Waterlander .....	319-240-6662		John Sells (west 1/2) .....	712-260-1019
<b>Clarke</b>	Hunter McAninch .....	641-414-2174	<b>Osceola</b>	Tait Anderson .....	712-260-1006
<b>Clay</b>	Joe Yarkosky .....	712-260-1004	<b>Page</b>	Todd Carrick .....	712-520-0507
<b>Clayton</b>	Jerry Farmer .....	563-880-0422	<b>Palo Alto</b>	Chris Subbert .....	712-260-1009
<b>Clinton</b>	Lucas Webinger .....	563-357-1078	<b>Plymouth</b>	Chad Morrow .....	712-260-1023
	Terry Nims .....	563-357-1812	<b>Pocahontas</b>	Nathan Hauptert .....	712-330-8462
<b>Crawford</b>	Katherine Hoepfner .....	712-420-1486	<b>Polk</b>	Nate Anderson .....	515-238-4849
<b>Dallas</b>	Dustin Eighmy .....	515-883-0228		Austin Durnan .....	515-238-5006
<b>Davis</b>	Bob Stuchel .....	641-777-2169	<b>Pottawattamie</b>	Chris Anunson .....	402-980-0610
	Chad Horn .....	641-777-7805		Logan Christofferson .....	712-249-2797
<b>Decatur</b>	Hunter McAninch .....	641-414-2174	<b>Poweshiek</b>	Richard Price (west 1/3) .....	712-520-0121
<b>Delaware</b>	Dakota Drish .....	563-920-0566	<b>Ringgold</b>	Jacob Schaben .....	712-520-5570
<b>Des Moines</b>	Paul Kay .....	319-759-0751	<b>Sac</b>	John Steinbach .....	641-660-0741
<b>Dickinson</b>	Blake Mills .....	712-260-1017	<b>Scott</b>	Corey Carlton .....	641-414-2173
	Dan Dirks .....	712-260-1018		Michael Miller .....	712-661-9237
<b>Dubuque</b>	Andrew Keil .....	563-590-1945	<b>Shelby</b>	Brooks Vanderbeek .....	563-349-8953
	Nate Johnson .....	563-590-1944	<b>Sioux</b>	Nick Rocca .....	563-349-9418
<b>Emmet</b>	Chris Subbert .....	712-260-1009	<b>Story</b>	Aaron Johnson .....	712-249-2015
<b>Fayette</b>	Chris Jones .....	319-939-4448		John Sells .....	712-260-1019
<b>Floyd</b>	Jacob Fulk .....	319-240-9174	<b>Tama</b>	Brandon Bergquist .....	515-290-0177
<b>Franklin</b>	Jordon Hansen .....	319-240-8033	<b>Taylor</b>	Jeffrey Barnes .....	515-290-4907
<b>Fremont</b>	Marlowe Wilson .....	712-520-0506	<b>Union</b>	Brett Reece .....	641-751-0931
<b>Greene</b>	Aron Arthur .....	515-370-0422	<b>Van Buren</b>	Andrea Bevington .....	712-520-0508
<b>Grundy</b>	Austin Dollen .....	641-751-5246	<b>Wapello</b>	Corey Carlton .....	641-414-2173
<b>Guthrie</b>	Jeremy King .....	712-250-0061		Chris Flynn .....	641-919-9115
<b>Hamilton</b>	Eddie Elkin .....	515-408-5568	<b>Warren</b>	Bob Stuchel .....	641-777-2169
	Nate Carr .....	515-238-2047	<b>Washington</b>	Chad Horn .....	641-777-7805
<b>Hancock</b>	Ben Bergman .....	641-425-0823		Allen Crouse .....	515-238-4847
<b>Hardin</b>	Nate Carr .....	515-238-2047	<b>Wayne</b>	Wesley Gould .....	641-660-3441
<b>Harrison</b>	Aaron Johnson .....	712-249-2015	<b>Webster</b>	Kyle Jensen .....	641-414-2175
<b>Henry</b>	Dan Henderson .....	319-653-1636		Bill Spece .....	515-571-0127
<b>Howard</b>	Marc Waterlander .....	319-240-6662	<b>Winnebago</b>	Eddie Elkin .....	515-408-5568
<b>Humboldt</b>	Matthew Petersen .....	712-260-9059	<b>Winneshiek</b>	Matthew Petersen .....	712-260-9059
	Bill Spece .....	515-571-0127	<b>Woodbury</b>	Michael Strauser .....	641-425-0821
<b>Ida</b>	Michael Miller .....	712-661-9237		Brian Roffman .....	563-380-0496
<b>Iowa</b>	Brad Baker .....	319-430-1630	<b>Worth</b>	Stacey Bragg .....	712-301-6735
<b>Jackson</b>	Lucas Dever .....	319-480-0397	<b>Wright</b>	Steven Griebel .....	712-301-4009
	Andrew Keil .....	563-590-1945		Kirby Bragg .....	712-870-2791
<b>Jasper</b>	Will Brickel .....	641-521-2003		Michael Strauser .....	641-425-0821
<b>Jefferson</b>	Chris Flynn .....	641-919-9115		Ben Bergman .....	641-425-0823
	Dan Henderson .....	319-653-1636			



**It's easy to add fishing to any outdoor outing. Keep tackle in your vehicle so you can wet a line—wherever, whenever.**



**With you wherever you go.**

The most up-to-date Iowa fishing regulations online!




**Including:**

- General Fishing Regulations
- Fishing Seasons and Limits
- License Information
- Fish Identification

**PLUS MORE!**



 **eRegulations.com**