

## DES MOINES RIVER

### Red Rock Lake to the Mississippi River

IOWA'S LARGEST INTERIOR RIVER, the Des Moines River, is blessed with abundant recreational opportunities, scenic landscape and early Iowa history. From the tailwaters of the Red Rock Reservoir to the Mississippi River, 143 stream miles of lazily meandering water flow through land which varies from flat agricultural bottomland to high bluff sandstone outcroppings. Today, the Des Moines River offers picnicking, boating and good fishing. In the past, the river has experienced the churning paddle of steamboats and the thunder of cannons during the Civil War.

IT IS  
RECOMMENDED

that county maps be obtained for each area. Pleasure boating is usually difficult by July due to low water, but the river maintains sufficient water depth throughout the year for small outboard boats and canoes. Water flow in the river depends largely on discharge from Red Rock Dam. Contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Red Rock or the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for up-to-date information on water levels. Care will be necessary during low-water periods to avoid sandbars and rocks.

THE FIRST STRETCH of river runs from the Red Rock Reservoir tailwater area to Eddyville. With gently rolling topography, this 31-mile stretch is the most meandering of the 143 stream miles.

THE TAILWATER AND EVELAND accesses provide good places to camp and picnic. All boat ramps are adequate except the one at Eddyville, which is usable only at high water.

CHANNEL CAT AND FLATHEAD catfishing are good from the tailwater area to Eddyville. Northern pike, walleye, crappie and white bass fishing are found at the tailwater area. Drum and carp can also be found here.

THE SECOND STRETCH IS 32 STREAM miles from Eddyville to Eldon. With a terrain of small bluffs and outcroppings, the river begins to straighten.

BACKUP WATER FROM the hydroelectric dam in Ottumwa provides pleasure boating through the summer months from above the dam to Chillicothe. When the

dam gates are open, boaters must be cautious near the dam. It is possible for travelers with light boats to portage around the south end of the dam without too much difficulty.

BOATERS, ESPECIALLY INEXPERIENCED canoeists, must be very cautious when shooting the rapids at the Bonaparte Dam. This dam has been washed out and presently appears as a substantial riffle extending the width of the river. Canoeists may take an easy portage around the south end of the dam if they prefer.

CHANNEL CATFISHING IS STILL GOOD. Paddlefish snagging and white bass fishing are good at the Bonaparte Dam. Sturgeon are common in this section of the river.

THE LOWEST REACH OF THE Des Moines River is from Farmington to the Mississippi River. River towns of Croton, Iowa, and Athens, Missouri, are the sites of the northernmost battle of the Civil War. In 1861, cannons were strategically placed on the bluffs of the Missouri side and fired across the river into Croton. Cannonballs are still imbedded in some homes.

PICNICKING IS AVAILABLE at Red Wing Park and Croton Civil War Memorial Park. Red Wing Park is located south of the river between the present channel and an old oxbow. Channel and flathead catfishing is fair throughout this stretch of river.



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Distance from Previous Access	Access Name	Location
0 miles	1. Red Rock Tailwater Area	4 mi SW Pella
20 miles	2. Eveland Access	6 mi SW Oskaloosa
9 miles	3. Hardfish Access	1 mi W Eddyville
1 mile	4. Eddyville Ramp	Eddyville
14 miles	5. Rock Bluff Park	4 mi W Ottumwa
3 miles	6. Blackhawk River Access	North Ottumwa
0 mile	7. Blackhawk Road Access	Across river from #6
1.5 miles	8. Coliseum Ramp	Ottumwa
6.3 miles	9. Cliffland Access	6 mi E Ottumwa
11 miles	10. Eldon Ramp	Eldon
4.5 miles	11. Shidepoke Access	Selma
15 miles	12. Austin Park	4 mi NE Keosauqua
6 miles	13. Keosauqua Ramp	Keosauqua
8.5 miles	14. Bentonsport Park	Bentonsport
4 miles	15. Bonaparte Ramp	Bonaparte
4 miles	16. Des Moines River Access	3 mi SE Bonaparte
2 miles	17. Farmington Access	Farmington
5 miles	18. Croton Civil War Memorial Park	Croton
5 miles	19. Turkey Run Access	3-1/2 mi SE Croton
8.5 miles	20. St. Francisville Access	4 mi S Argyle
11.5 miles	21. Red Wing Access	1-1/2 mi W Keokuk

