



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of February 22.](#)

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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## **NORTHWEST**

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice is 12 inches thick. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows or waxworms on a jig in areas with structure anywhere from 10-15 feet deep. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch keeper size bluegills with a teardrop jig tipped with a waxworm fished near structure.

### [Bacon Creek Lake](#)

Rainbow trout were stocked on Jan. 27th.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

The winter aeration system is on in Town Bay. Expect areas of thin ice and open water in Town Bay. Ice thickness is around 15 inches off of Ice House boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a teardrop jig and waxworm fished off the bottom near Ice House Point and Gunshot Hill, the rock pile off of Gunshot Hill, and the rock pile off Cottonwood Point. Anglers have had luck fishing waxworms in 8 feet of water in the dredge cuts in the east basin. Some sorting is needed. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a spoon and minnow fished on the rock piles off Cottonwood Point and in the east basin. Low light hours and after sunset are best.

### [Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice is around 10-12 inches thick. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with waxworms fished near the bottom.

### [Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Use caution, conditions are variable - drill test holes often and expect less ice near inflows, in the main channel, and near trees. **Walleye** - Fair: A few walleye are being picked up with jigging spoons and a minnow head. Low numbers, but most are bigger fish with some over 25 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Decent numbers of bluegill catches reported with waxworms on a teardrop jig. Some sorting is needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a minnow on a jig fished near structure in 10-15 feet of water.

### [Moorland Pond](#)

Rainbow trout were stocked on Jan. 20th. Use small tube jigs tipped with bait or live minnows under a bobber.

### [Storm Lake \(including Little Storm Lake\)](#)

Most ice is around 16-19 inches, but there are variable conditions near shore - some areas of shoreline had open water within the last couple weeks so use caution. **Walleye**- Fair: Use rattle spoons and jigging spoons with a minnow head in 8 feet of water on the edges of the old dredged area in the west end. Most of the action is at the west end of the lake off Casino Beach, Frank Starr, and College Island. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some perch have been picked up while targeting walleye. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few crappies are being picked up while fishing for walleye.

Most lakes in western Iowa are maintaining 10-18 inches of ice. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Blue Pit](#)

Trout are still being caught. Fish near the pier with small jigs tipped with live bait. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

### Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 17-20 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Ice heaves have made access on the lake difficult in spots. **Yellow Bass** - Good: The bite has picked up. Use light tackle and be mobile to stay on fish. The best bite is still at dawn and the last hour of light. **Walleye** – Fair: Try jigging spoons and minnow heads near the island. The best bite is still at dawn and the last hour of light. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 17-20 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with spikes or a minnow head near the edge of the dredge cut. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with spikes near the edge of the dredge cut.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 17-21 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. **Walleye** - Slow.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 17-19 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators.

For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### East Okoboji Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Yellow bass action is picking up; fish traditional sites and move often to find active fish.

### Five Island Lake

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers have had good pole bending activity with numbers of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Action has picked up, good numbers of fish have been harvested; fish the dredge cuts for the best action. **Black Crappie** - Good: Incidental catches by yellow bass anglers reflect bonus numbers in the creel.

### Ingham Lake

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye action has slowed; persistence will be rewarded with a good catch.

### Lost Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Good numbers of fish are being caught; fish the Stoney Point area for the best action. **Walleye** - Fair: Numbers of fish are reported from Lost Island Lake; change tactics with the changing weather conditions. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some yellow perch and black crappie are being caught by anglers fishing for yellow bass.

### Minnewashta Lake

**Bluegill** - Good: Report of bluegill being caught; sorting is needed. Anglers are also catching crappie and yellow bass mixed in the bite.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system.

### Silver Lake (Palo Alto)

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers report catching walleye; best bite is during late day. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fishing action has been very variable; ice anglers are catching nice size perch.

### Spirit Lake

Limited access to the lake.

### Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Persistent and patient anglers will be rewarded with good numbers of yellow perch 12 inches and larger in the creel. **Northern Pike** - Good: Action has picked up; anglers are harvesting northern pike from the lake.

### West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Bluegills continue to be fussy; persistence and patience will be rewarded with good numbers of fish caught. Reports of improving water clarity. **Northern Pike** - Good: Good numbers of fish up to 36 inches are being caught. Tip-up action will improve in the next few weeks.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions may change fast with warmer temperatures. Backwaters have about 20 inches of ice. Use caution when going on ice. Check ice depths often. The bite is variable. **Bluegill** - Slow: Find fish in slack water out of current. Stumps, brush piles, and deep holes hold fish. Use small jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find fish in 8-10 feet water. Use minnows, waxworms, and multi-colored spikes on a teardrop shaped bladed lure.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Current water clarity is marginal. Weekend clarity will depend on precipitation type and amount. Streams with better watersheds will clear quicker. Slack water in deeper holes may freeze, but should melt in the afternoon. With a slower bite, use bigger flashier flies and lures. Parking lots on wildlife management areas are not plowed. Use care when parking along the road. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Midges hatch all season. Try wholly buggers or a flashy fly for a hungry brookie. **Brown Trout** - Good: Afternoon melt water should turn on a brownie. Insects will hatch on sunny afternoons. Use small midge

patterns. With off color water, try a flashy spinner or fly. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Drift a feathered spinner, crankbait or a hook tipped with worm along an undercut bank.

### Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is at least 24 inches with snow. Water is stained yellow. Few anglers are out. Anglers finding habitat will find fish. Open water around the aerator. The bite has slowed. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Move around to find fish. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow head. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes around structure.

### Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 24 inches ice with variable amounts of snow. Water is turbid. Afternoon bite is best. When the bite slows, move to a different spot. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Key in to brush and dangle a small jig about a foot or two above the stems.

### Volga Lake

Ice thickness is 20+ inches topped with melted snow. Water is stained. Afternoon bite is best. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Drop your lure about 3 feet above structure and watch them swim up to the bait. Use small teardrop shaped jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish around structure in 14-16 feet water about a foot off the bottom.

Expect a wintry mix of precipitation this weekend. Temperatures warm slightly through the weekend with mid 30s by Sunday. Most stream clarity is marginal at best with current runoff activity. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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We have not received any reports this week. Ice edges are getting soft and the bite has been slow; anglers are not getting out. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

### Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing has bumped up to 8.2 feet. Backwater ice is variable with around 2 feet; use caution accessing the ice as shorelines and sloughs may become unsafe with warmer weather. Ice cleats may be needed as snow disappears. **Walleye** - No Report: Access to tail-water areas is difficult with large areas of ice flows. **Black**

**Crappie**- Slow: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - No Report: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Ice anglers are catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Use tip-ups baited with shiners along the edges of deeper cuts with vegetation. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Both rod and reel and tip-up anglers are catching several 15-18 inch bass using red spike waxies through the ice.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

River level at Lynxville has risen to 15.8 feet and may rise slightly over the next week. The tail-water at Lynxville is still iced in. Backwater ice is variable with around 2 feet of ice; use caution accessing the ice as shorelines and sloughs may become unsafe with warmer weather. Ice cleats may be needed as snow disappears. Late ice can be good fishing on Bussey Lake. Avoid the boat ramp area as ice is not stable. Park along the south side of causeway road and walk down. **Walleye** - No Report: Access to tail-water areas is difficult with large areas of ice flows. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Bluegill** - Fair: Ice anglers are catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Use tip-ups baited with shiners along the edges of deeper cuts with vegetation. **Black Crappie**- Slow: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Both rod and reel and tip-up anglers are catching several 15-18 inch bass using red spike waxies through the ice.

### **Mississippi River Pool 11**

River level at Guttenberg has risen over a foot to 8.1 feet and may rise slightly over the next week. Backwater ice is variable with around 2 feet of ice; use caution accessing the ice as shorelines and sloughs may become unsafe with warmer weather. Boat ramps at Guttenberg are still locked in ice, but may recede in the coming weeks. **Black Crappie**- Slow: Occasional crappie being caught in just 2-4 feet of water just under the ice. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Late ice can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Bluegill** - Fair: Ice anglers are catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Use tip-ups baited with shiners along the edges of deeper cuts with vegetation. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Both rod and reel and tip-up anglers are catching several 15-18 inch bass using red spike waxies through the ice.

Upper Mississippi River levels are rising with rains and the breakup of local tributaries. Most ramps are still iced in and areas below the dams covered in ice flows. Warmer weather and runoff have fish more active. Backwater ice is variable with around 2 feet of ice. With thawing snow, shorelines and areas with current may become weak or unsafe;

use caution.

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### **Mississippi River Pool 12**

Water levels are stabilizing at 8.7 feet at the Dubuque Lock and the RR bridge is 11.4 feet. This is up several feet from last week. Ice fishing is treacherous with open water now formed along the edges of most backwater areas.

### **Mississippi River Pool 13**

Water levels are stabilizing at 12.4 feet at Bellevue. This is up several feet from last week. Ice fishing is treacherous with open water now formed along the edges of most backwater areas.

### **Mississippi River Pool 14**

Water levels are still rising and are 9.4 feet at Fulton, 12.4 feet at Camanche and 6.7 feet at LeClaire. This is up nearly five feet from last week. Ice fishing is treacherous with open water now formed along the edges of most backwater areas.

### **Mississippi River Pool 15**

Water levels are still rising and are 12 feet at Rock Island. This is up five feet from last week. Fishing has been non-existent after the big rain event.

The River changed dramatically this week due to the heavy rainfall on frozen ground. The River rose from 3 to 5 feet throughout the district. Ice conditions changed considerably and tailwaters are somewhat open for boat launching, but the water clarity is poor. Ice fishing will be tough with open water near shorelines. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

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### **Mississippi River Pool 16**

Tailwater stage is 10.68 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater stage has risen close to 5 feet since Monday. Current forecasts have the tailwater stage reaching 11.7 feet. Unsafe ice conditions with the recent rain, warm weather, and rising river levels.

### **Mississippi River Pool 17**

Tailwater stage is 9.6 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater stage has risen close to 5 feet since Monday. Tailwater stage is forecasted to reach 10.9 feet by the weekend. River stage at Muscatine is 11.7 feet and forecasted to reach 12.7 feet. The ramp and parking lot at Big Timber is closed due to flooding. There are unsafe ice conditions due to recent rains, warm weather, and rising river levels.

### **Mississippi River Pool 18**

Tailwater stage is 12.18 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater

stage has risen close to 6 feet since Monday. The current forecast has the tailwater stage reaching 14.7 feet. Flood stage is 15 feet. Unsafe ice conditions due to recent rains, warm weather, and rising river levels.

### **Mississippi River Pool 19**

Tailwater stage is 7.90 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is rising. Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 18 has risen close to 5 feet since Monday. River stage at Burlington is 12.95 feet and forecasted to reach 14.9 feet. Flood stage at Burlington is 15 feet. Unsafe ice conditions due to recent rains, warm weather, and rising river levels.

River stages have been on the rise this past week with the recent rains and warm weather. Water clarity is poor. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow. There are unsafe ice conditions with the recent rains, warm weather, and rising river conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## **SOUTHEAST**

### **Big Hollow Lake**

Unsafe ice conditions.

### **Lake Belva Deer**

Unsafe ice conditions.

### **Lake Darling**

Unsafe ice conditions. 60 degrees and rain on Monday. 43 degrees and rain on Monday night into Tuesday has ruined what ice was left. Last couple of days of colder weather has refrozen open water, hiding the bad spots.

### **Lake Geode**

Drained for renovation work scheduled for later this year.

For more information on the fishing at the above lakes and rivers, contact the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

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### **Central Park Lake**

The lake is drained for the renovation project that is going on now.

### **Coralville Reservoir**

The lake is holding at winter pool of 683.4 feet. Ice conditions are deteriorating with the runoff and increase in flow. Water clarity is poor.



### [Diamond Lake](#)

There is open water around the lake and ice conditions are not safe.

### [Grundy County Lake](#)

There is still 12 inches of ice, but the edges may be getting soft by the weekend.

### [Hannen Lake](#)

There is 10 feet of open water around the edges. Ice fishing is not recommended.

### [Iowa Lake \(Iowa Co.\)](#)

There is open water around the lake; ice conditions are not safe.

### [Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is drained for the renovation project that will take place next winter.

### [Lake Macbride](#)

The lake edges are either open or soft. You need a plank to access most areas. The remaining ice away from the shore is 6-8 inches in most areas, but use caution. There have been a few anglers around the main ramp, under the highlines, across from the beach, and on the south arm. A plank may be needed to get on. Some people have been walking off the boat rental docks; use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a jig/waxie around any brush or deeper rock. Size is marginal at best as these fish top out at 7.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: It is day to day on good catches. Some days have been good and others are slow. Fish over deeper wood or stumps or look for suspended fish over the deeper basin with a jig/waxie.

### [Otter Creek Lake](#)

The edges are soft and open in some areas. The remaining ice is reported as about 8-10 inches. There was an angler out yet on the 21st; use caution.

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still 8.5 feet low from the restoration project. The lake came up some with the runoff, so shorelines are bad and accessing the ice may be extremely difficult. The remaining ice may be fishable; use caution.

### [Rodgers Park Lake](#)

There is 6 feet of open water around the edges of the upper end. The lower end is a little better. Ice fishing is not recommended.

### [Sand Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

The edges are soft and open in places. The aeration hole is very large.

### [Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

Ice conditions on the river and backwaters are not safe.

Most of the smaller lakes are unsafe to ice fish. Some of the larger lakes have decent ice, but the edges are soft or open; use extreme caution. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### **Lake Miami**

Unsafe ice conditions. Getting on the ice is not recommended.

### **Lake Sugema**

Unsafe ice conditions. Getting on the ice is not recommended. Lake Sugema is about 25% open water and Tug Forks West is open.

### **Lake Wapello**

Unsafe ice conditions. Getting on the ice is not recommended.

### **Rathbun Reservoir**

The current lake level is 903.19 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body. The ramps at the Rathbun marina are closed for the season and all the campgrounds are closed. Unsafe ice conditions. The main lake has areas of open water. Getting on the ice is not recommended.

### **Red Haw Lake**

Unsafe ice conditions. Getting on the ice is not recommended.

Unsafe ice conditions across the district. The district includes Mahaska, Lucas, Wayne, Monroe, Appanoose, Wapello, Davis and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

## **SOUTHWEST**

### **Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake**

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use spoons or small panfish jigs tipped with waxworms or live minnows. Trout tend to swim the perimeter, so set up close to shore in 3 to 10 feet of water.

### **Big Creek Lake**

Black Crappie - Fair: Anglers fishing mid-lake, generally out from the beach area and marina area in 25 to 35 feet of water are finding a fair crappie bite.

### **Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)**

Walleye - Fair: Anglers are catching fair numbers of walleyes below the Saylorville

spillway slowly fishing jigs tipped with twister tails and/or minnows.

### [Don Williams Lake](#)

Black Crappie - Fair: Anglers are catching crappies suspended 10-15 feet down in 20-30 feet of water in the late afternoon and evenings. Midday they are also being found shallower near sunken habitat in 10-15 feet of water. Two size ranges are being caught. Expect to fish through many 5-7 inch fish for the 9-10 inch fish.

### [Hickory Grove Lake](#)

Bluegill - Good: Catch 7-8 inch bluegills over brush piles and suspended in deeper water. Move around to stay on active fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Most anglers are finding the crappie fishing to be slow, but when fish are caught the size is good. Crappie catches have been mostly limited to dawn and dusk.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked Feb. 10th. Fish the perimeter of the lake with small panfish jigs and jigging spoons tipped with waxworms.

Ice thicknesses in Central Iowa are staying in the 8 to 14 inch range with some edge deterioration from rain runoff. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

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### [Lake Anita](#)

Ice has started to deteriorate on the main lake. Use extreme caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegill fishing is best in the afternoon. Catch fish up to 9.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Best bite is late afternoon and after dark. Fish will average 9 inches.

### [Littlefield Lake](#)

Anglers report 6 to 8 inches of ice and fair fishing. Use extreme caution this week as ice will start to get soft and be unsafe. **Bluegill** - Good: Fishing is good around the cedar tree piles for bluegills up to 9 inches. Morning and late afternoon bite is best. Be prepared to sort for larger fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 10 to 12 inch black crappies are being caught around the tree piles.

### [Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose still has fishable ice, but it will start to deteriorate this week. **Bluegill** - Fair: The best bluegill fishing has moved to the morning bite. Fish will average 8.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Black crappie become active just before dark. Fish are 9.5 inches.

Lakes and ponds in the southern part of the district are unsafe to fish. Use extreme caution; ice will start to deteriorate this week. For more information, call the Cold Springs District Office at 712-769-2587.

