



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 27.](#)

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.

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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice is around 4-5 inches thick in front of the boat ramp. Ice conditions have deteriorated since last week; use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some bluegill have been picked up near the east shoreline. Find fish in submerged structure.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

As of Dec. 27, ice thickness near the boat ramp at Ice House Point was 4 inches of clear ice under 1 inch of cloudy ice. If you venture out, use extreme caution; these conditions can change fast. There are open water areas off Ice House Point, Gunshot Hill and in the east basin. **Bluegill** - Fair: Over the last several days, bluegills have been picked up from open water under the inlet bridge and through the ice in front of the Ice House Point boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are being picked up from the open water under the inlet bridge. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

As of Dec. 27th, ice is around 3 inches off the boat ramp; ice fishing is not recommended.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Ice conditions have deteriorated; ice fishing in most areas is not recommended.

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

Ice is variable with 5-6 inches in some areas and soft ice or open water in other areas. Some areas have deteriorated during the warmer temperatures and rains. Use caution if venturing out; where float coats, bring picks and check ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try waxworms and minnows.

Ice conditions in the Black Hawk District have deteriorated with the recent above normal temperatures and rains. Ice conditions range from unsafe to 5-6 inches on some lakes. Most lakes still have pockets of open water throughout; use extreme caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 to 11 inches. Use extreme caution on the accesses where water is flowing on the ice after the recent rain. Ice cleats are recommended. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Use a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes. You have to be mobile to stay on fish. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of small fish are being caught. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** – Fair: Best bite is early morning and evening.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. Avoid the pressure ridge near the center of the lake and a hole kept open by waterfowl by the east fishing jetty. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms in the evening. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow in the evening. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Lots of small fish are being caught.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 to 11 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Best bite is early morning and evening. You have to stay mobile to find fish.

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

[East Okoboiji Lake](#)

Some ice fishing activity observed on the south end of the lake.

[Lost Island Lake](#)

Ice conditions remain variable. **Black Crappie** - Good: Report of fish being caught from the lake.

Scharnberg Pond

Rainbow Trout - Good: Next trout stocking will be January 19, 2019 at noon.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Poor ice conditions continue on the east side of the lake.

Spirit Lake

Anglers are expanding the areas they are ice fishing on the main lake; ice conditions remain variable. **Walleye** - Good: Angler acceptable size fish are being caught; best action is half hour before sunset to half hour after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish are being caught; sorting is needed as numbers of small fish will also be in the catch. **Bluegill** - Good: Report of good numbers of fish being caught from the Anglers Bay area.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Fair: Report of fish being caught from the lake; action is slow, but anglers will be pleased by the quality of the fish caught. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Report of fish being caught; use tip ups for the best action.

Upper Gar Lake

Limited ice condition continue; there are open water areas on the lake due to the flow.

Virgin Lake

Walleye - Good: Good opportunities to catch fish averaging 16 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Fish averaging 8 inches are common.

West Okoboji Lake

Ice fishing activity observed at Emerson, Little Emerson and the north end of the lake. Ice conditions remain variable on the Iowa's Great Lakes and area lakes. Majority of anglers continue to walk out at this time.

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

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Check ice depths often, especially where there is current. Flows remain high. Go with a buddy. Let someone know where you are going and when you will return. Backwaters have 7 inches ice with water on top. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or colored spike. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Catch perch up to 10 inches on a waxworm. Bounce a jig off the bottom for fun action.

Decorah District Streams

Iowa's trout season stays open all year long. Many trout streams run through wildlife management areas. Wear bright colors and make noise so hunters know you're not a deer. **Brown Trout** - Good: Use larger flies or lures mimicking minnows. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Fish near the bottom if no hatches are occurring. Use a weighted caddis

stonefly or mayfly nymph. **Brook Trout** - Good: Try nymphs, emerger or aquatic bug patterns when hatches are slow. Fish the calm area next to a fast channel of water at the head of a pool.

Lake Hendricks

No motorized vehicles allowed on ice. Ice depths average 7 inches. Open water around the aerator; keep away from the aerator. Use caution on ice. Rain could open water. **Bluegill** - Slow: Early bite is best. For clear ice and water be set-up quiet and ready early. Use small jigs tipped with waxworm or spike near deeper water drop offs. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Anglers are catching a few small bass.

Lake Meyer

Ice is 5 to 6 inches. Edges may get soft with rain and warmer temperatures. Check ice depths often, especially near springs. Caution recommended. The bite remains slow. **Bluegill** - Slow: Early bite is best. Use small teardrop shaped jigs tipped with waxworm in brush piles in 12-15 feet of water. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass have been caught while fishing for panfish.

Volga Lake

Ice fishing not recommended. Edges are thin. Warmer weather and precipitation will weaken ice. Most activity is around the dock up from parking lot. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish the brush piles.

Wintry mix of precipitation forecast thru Friday. Above normal temperatures Thursday before turning much colder. Rain and rising river levels will create variable ice conditions. Use extreme caution as conditions can change fast. Ice depths are highly variable. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports of anglers catching walleye on the river; rivers may become turbid with recent rainfall. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are catching walleye using lead heads and plastic baits tipped with or without a minnow.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams are turbid and on the rise, but should be fishable by the upcoming weekend.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

No reports this past week on the Maquoketa River; the river currently on the rise with the recent rainfall.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

No reports this past week on the Shell Rock River; the river is currently on the rise with the recent rainfall.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

No reports this past week on the Wapsipinicon River; the river is currently on the rise

with the recent rainfall.

The recent wet weather has made for a dismal fishing forecast. Rivers and streams are on the rise and turbid; trout streams may be clear by the upcoming weekend. Ice conditions are very poor; ice fishing is not recommended. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing is up slightly this week at 8.2 feet and is expected to remain stable this week. Backwater ice reports of 6-7 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs tipped with a minnow below the Lock & Dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigging spoons or a hair jig with minnows in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill through the ice is picking up with a lot of sorting through smaller ones. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Reports of bass being caught on pole or tip-ups in backwater lake areas.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville is down slightly to 14.9 feet and is expected to remain stable this week. Ice thickness around 6 inches, but rains may bring unsafe conditions. Bussey Lake ice is thin on the boat ramp side; edges have open water. **Walleye**- Fair: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs tipped with a minnow below the Lock & Dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jigging spoons or a hair jig with minnows in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill through the ice is picking up with a lot of sorting through smaller ones. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level at Guttenberg is down slightly at 6.6 feet this week. Backwater ice thickness is variable, averaging 6 inches. Avoid ice in areas with current and the open water around the edges. Zollicoffers at Mud Lake and Sunfish have been fair for panfishing. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs tipped with a minnow below the Lock & Dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jigging spoons or a hair jig with minnows in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dam. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegill through the ice is picking up with a lot of sorting through smaller ones. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes.

Upper Mississippi River conditions remain fairly stable this week. Backwater ice conditions are better as you go north. Most backwaters have 6-7 inches of ice, but recent rains and warmer temperatures create variable ice depths. Avoid areas of current and

edges where ice is unstable. Open water fishing is still occurring below the locks and dams.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are steady this week at 7 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.4 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. Some ice flows at the tailwater, but it remains open to boating. **Sauger** - Good: Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular methods of catching walleye and sauger. Smaller sauger came into the tailwater later this fall. **Bluegill** - Good: Reports of panfish being caught, but ice is decent in only a few areas.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels are stable this week at 7.8 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. Some ice flows at the tailwater, but it remains open to boating. The north ramp at Sabula is now open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - Good: Three way rigs with minnows or a jig and minnow is the most popular methods to catch walleye and sauger. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice thickness varies greatly; some spots have decent thickness, but not a lot of reports yet as ice remains marginal in many places.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are stable at 7.6 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 11.2 feet at Camanche and 5.8 feet at LeClaire. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 36 degrees. **Sauger** - Good: Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular ways to catch walleye and sauger.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is steady this week at 8.2 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 36 degrees.

Tailwaters are open to angling, but ice flows are occurring. Ice fishing continues in some places, but anglers remain cautious about conditions. Water levels are now stable throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport is 7.44 feet and has been fairly steady the past few days but, forecast to start rising by the weekend with recent rains. Forecasts have the river level reaching 10.1 feet by January 1st. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers this past week, but the bite may change with the forecast rising river levels. Unsafe ice conditions. **Walleye** - Good: Try vertical jigging with plastics below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with plastics below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.43 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been fairly steady the past few days, but is forecast to start rising over the weekend due to recent rains. River levels are forecast to reach 8.8 feet by the middle of next week. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger this past week, but the bite may change with rising river levels in the forecast. Unsafe ice conditions. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye fishing below the dam has been hit or miss. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger fishing below the dam has been hit or miss. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.60 feet at Lock and Dam 17 and is forecast to start rising by the weekend with the recent rains. The current forecast has the tailwater stage reaching 10.2 feet by next week. The Toolsboro ramp is open. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers this past week, but the bite may change with the river level forecast to rise. Unsafe ice conditions. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.75 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington but is forecast to start rising by the weekend with the recent rains. Current forecasts have the tailwater stage reaching 7 feet by Wednesday. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers, but the bite may change with river stage forecast to rise. Unsafe ice conditions. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

Tailwater stages have been fairly steady the past few days, but are forecast to start rising over the weekend due to recent rains. Main channel water temperature is around 35-36 degrees. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers, but the bite may change with river levels forecast to rise. Unsafe ice conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Very unsafe ice.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

[Lake Darling](#)

We lost ice over the last week. Several areas of open water on the lake. Lots of very thin ice ¼ inch around the shore.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Warm weather is not forming much new ice.

For more information on the above lake, call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake was restocked this spring after the renovation project.

[Central Park Pond](#)

About 5 inches of ice reported on West Pond. **Bluegill** - Good: Most fish are 4-7 inches.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level is at winter pool of 683.4 feet. The lake had frozen over, but now has lots of open water.

[Diamond Lake](#)

Much of the lake has open water.

[Green Castle Lake](#)

Anglers report 3-5 inches of ice on the lake.

[Grundy County Lake](#)

Much of the lake has 4-6 inches of ice; still use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs/waxies around the sunken brush or rock piles. **Walleye** – Fair.

[Hannen Lake](#)

About 4 inches of ice. There has been some ice fishing activity on the lake, but use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a jig/waxie around sunken trees.

[Iowa Lake \(Iowa County\)](#)

Reports of 3-4 inches of ice at the boat ramp, with less ice on the main lake. The ice should be considered unsafe.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake has 1-3 inches of unsafe ice.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake had up to 6 inches of ice, but it has deteriorated, especially along shore, in the boat channel, and in the southeast bay. The lake should be considered unsafe.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake has up to 4 inches of ice, but should be considered unsafe.

[Rodgers Park Lake](#)

Much of the lake has 3-4 inches of ice, but the upper end has open water and some of the shoreline is poor. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Sand Lake

Unsafe ice.

Most areas in the Lake Macbride District are unsafe for ice fishing. A few areas between Highway 20 and Highway 30 have "fishable" ice. Use extreme caution if venturing out anywhere on the ice. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Lake Miami

Fishing pressure has been low with recent weather conditions.

Lake Sugema

The north ramp is closed due to a parking lot construction project. Fishing pressure has been low with recent weather conditions.

Lake Wapello

Fishing pressure has been low.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.06 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Open water conditions on the lake. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

Red Haw Lake

Fishing pressure has been low.

Open water fishing opportunities are still available at most lakes. Predicted colder temperatures should help with making some ice. 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

Boone District Farm Ponds

Bluegill - Good: Some ponds north of Highway 30 may be holding on to suitable ice; be very cautious and check ice often. The bluegill and crappie fishing is especially good during early season.

Central Iowa ice conditions have deteriorated more this week; ice fishing is not advised. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Cold Springs District Farm Ponds

Many ponds in the district have lost a significant amount of ice. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Warm weather conditions have continued through the Christmas holiday. Ice fishing is not advised in the southwest district. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.