



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 3.](#)

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 5-6 inches thick in front of the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some bluegill have been picked up near the west shoreline. Find fish in submerged structure. Fish near the bottom with a small jig tipped with waxworm.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice is variable. Most angling activity has been restricted to the area near Ice House Point boat ramp and in the bay near the inlet bridge. As of Jan. 2, ice thickness off the boat

ramp of Ice House Point was 7 inches. If you venture out, use caution; these conditions can change fast depending on where you go. There are thin ice/open water areas off Ice House Point, Gunshot Hill and in the east basin. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills have been picked up from open water under the inlet bridge and through the ice between the Ice House Point boat ramp and Gunshot Hill. Use a small jig tipped with waxworm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are being picked up through the ice in between the Ice House Point boat ramp and Gunshot Hill in about 4-5 feet of water. Use a small jig tipped with waxworm. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

### **Black Hawk Pits**

As of Jan. 2nd, ice was 5-6 inches thick off the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers have picked up some bluegill using a small jig tipped with waxworm fished near the bottom.

### **Brushy Creek Lake**

Ice conditions are variable. Anglers have been restricted to the north boat ramp and the northeast arm, and the south boat ramp around the island where there are reports of 5-7 inches of ice. Expect areas of open water and unsafe ice near the beach, in the main lake and near inflows. Use extreme caution as mild temperatures over the next week can change these conditions fast.

### **Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)**

Ice is variable with 6-11 inches. With predicted mild temperatures the next few days, these conditions can change. Expect some areas to have thinner ice or open water near pressure seams. Use caution if venturing out; where float coats, bring picks and check ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons. With water clarity around 5 feet, most action has been during low light conditions in 5-6 feet of water. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try waxworms in 4-6 feet of water in mornings or evenings.

Ice conditions in the Black Hawk District remain variable; some lakes have thin ice and pockets of open water while others have up to 10 inches in some areas. Use caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### **Clear Lake**

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow using a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm. You have to be mobile to stay on fish. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Lots of small fish are being caught. If you're not going to use

the fish you catch, please release them. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** – Fair: A few walleyes are being caught fishing the rock reefs. 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.

### Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Lots of 6.5 to 7 inch fish are being caught.

### Lower Pine Lake

Significant open water on the west side of the lake. Fishing not recommended.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 10 to 11 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Best bite is early morning and evening. You have to stay mobile to find fish. **Walleye** - Fair: Dead stick a minnow while you're jigging for panfish.

### Upper Pine Lake

Ice thickness varies from 1 to 4 inches. A few small bluegills are being caught.

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

Some ice fishing activity observed on the south end of the lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish are being caught; sorting is needed with small fish mixed in the catch. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Move often and drill many holes to stay on the school of active fish; sorting is needed.

### Lake Pahoja

**Bluegill** - Good: Report of good numbers of angler acceptable size bluegill being caught with large fish over 8 inches not uncommon in the catch.

### Lost Island Lake

**Yellow Perch** - Good: Report of fish being caught from the lake with "bonus mixed bag"

of bluegill and crappie in the catch.

### Scharnberg Pond

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Next trout stocking is Jan. 19 at noon.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Lake aeration system on the east side of the lake is operational as of Jan 3. Use caution; thin ice and open water is common in this area.

### Spirit Lake

**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 a mixed bag of bluegill and crappie being caught from the Anglers Bay and Hales area.

### Trumbull Lake

**Yellow Perch** - Fair: Report of fish being caught from the lake; anglers are very pleased with the quality of the fish that are caught. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Report of fish being caught; use tip ups for the best action.

### Virgin Lake

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

### West Okoboji Lake

**Bluegill** - Good: Report of anglers catching good numbers of bluegills.

Ice conditions have improved on the Iowa Great Lakes and area lakes. Foot or ATV traffic at this time; no vehicles as of Jan. 2 on the lakes. Mild temperatures return and are in the forecast for the upcoming week. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

## NORTHEAST

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Water levels rose almost 5 feet with last rain event. Ice fishing is not recommended. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or colored spike.

## **Decorah District Streams**

Non-resident anglers can now buy a 2019 fishing license and trout fee. Stream conditions greatly improved from last week. Flows are high with rain and snow melt. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Use larger flies or lures mimicking minnows. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Rainbow Trout spawning is near. Larger fish will move to headwaters to lay eggs. Use a weighted caddis stonefly or mayfly nymph. **Brook Trout** - Fair: 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. Water is dirty from last week's rain. **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 warmer temperatures. Check ice depths often, especially near springs. Water is dirty from last week's rain. Use caution. 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 is not recommended. Use extreme caution; edges are thin. Warmer weather and precipitation will weaken ice. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish the brush piles.

Mild temperatures and snow melt will add to already swollen rivers and streams. Area streams rose 3 to 5 feet with last rain event. Ice conditions are unreliable. Use extreme caution as conditions will change fast. Ice depths are highly variable. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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## **Casey Lake (aka Hickory Hills Lake)**

Areas of both good and poor ice conditions. Good reports of crappie and bluegill being caught. Find structure near the dam and in the cove areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Try various ice jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try many

ice jigs tipped with a waxworm at various depths as crappie may be suspended. Try fishing a dead stick with a live minnow and bobber.

### [Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

Reports of anglers catching walleye on the river; the river is starting to clear. Access should be good with the warming trend ahead. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are catching walleye using lead heads and plastic baits tipped with or without a minnow.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams are in excellent condition; angling could be really good with a bit of runoff. Trout can be more susceptible when water is just off color. **Brown Trout** - Good: With the recent warm trend, there should be good hatches on area streams.

### [Maquoketa River \(above Monticello\)](#)

No reports this past week on the Maquoketa River; the river is falling. Try the whitewater park for walleye with the beautiful forecast ahead.

### [North Prairie Lake](#)

Use extreme caution on the ice with the warm forecast ahead. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try ice fishing jigs tipped with a waxworm. With the warm weather ahead, move often to many holes to find active fish.

### [Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#)

No reports this past week on the Shell Rock River; the river is falling. Access should be good with the upcoming warming trend.

### [Wapsipinicon River \(Tripoli to Troy Mills\)](#)

No reports this past week on the Wapsipinicon River; the river falling but still remains high and turbid.

The extended forecast looks beautiful to get out and catch some fish. Interior rivers are starting to clear and river access should be ideal. Ice conditions vary considerably and will most likely deteriorate with warm weather ahead. Use extreme caution if ice fishing. Trout streams are in excellent condition. 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 risen a foot to 9.2 feet .Still a lot of variability in ice conditions

this week. Most backwaters with no current have around 6-8 inches. **Walleye** - Slow: 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 has risen almost two foot to 16.7 feet. Backwaters have around 7 inches of ice. Ice is not safe to cross at Sny Magill with the warmer temperatures and recent snow cover. Lower end of Bussey Lake still has unstable ice around edges. **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** - 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 has risen to 8.3 feet this week. Backwater ice thickness is variable from 6-7 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** - Slow: 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 levels are rising. Backwater ice conditions will change fast with upcoming warm weather. Most backwaters have 6-7 inches of ice. Warmer temperatures and snow cover may create variable ice depths. Avoid areas of current and edges where ice is unstable. Ice flows in main channel are making open water fishing difficult at the locks & dams.

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### [Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are steady this week at 7.7 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Big ice flows are reported in the tailwaters. **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 getting scarce. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Reports of nice crappies mixed in with the bluegills, but safe ice is getting scarce.

### [Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels are stable this week at 8.6 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. Big ice flows in 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.

### [Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are stable at 8 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 11.6 feet at Camanche and 6.2 feet at LeClaire. Ice flows are occurring in the tailwater. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 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 9.3 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees.

Tailwaters are open to angling, but ice flows are occurring on a regular basis. Ice fishing is limited, but anglers remain cautious about conditions. Ice is expected to be nearly eliminated after the weekend warm spell. Water levels are now stable throughout the district. 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 at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport is 9.13 feet and has risen close to 2 feet since last week due to recent rains. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater stage has started to fall. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow with the rise in river levels. **Walleye** – Slow. **Sauger** – Slow.



### Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 8.57 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has risen close to 2 feet since last week due to recent rains. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater stage has started to fall. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. **Walleye** – Slow. **Sauger** – Slow.

### Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 10.94 feet at Lock and Dam 17 and risen close to 3 feet since last weekend. Unsafe ice conditions. The gates are out of the water at the dam. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rise in river level. **Sauger** – Slow. **Walleye** – Slow.

### Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 7.87 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has risen close to 2.5 feet since last weekend. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rise in river levels. **Walleye** – Slow. **Sauger** – Slow.

Tailwater stages have risen 2-3 feet since last week due to recent rains. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the recent rise in water levels. 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. Forecast warm weather will continue to melt ice.

### Lake Darling

No safe ice. Mostly open water except for on the campground arm out of the wind and from the main boat ramp on up the lake.

### Lost Grove Lake

Unsafe ice conditions.

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

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### [Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level is at winter pool of 683.4 feet. The lake has lots of open water.

### [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.

### [Hannen Lake](#)

There was up to 4 inches of ice, but there is some open water on the east shore. There has been some ice fishing activity on the lake, but ice conditions will deteriorate over the next week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a jig/waxie around sunken trees.

### [Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

### [Lake Macbride](#)

The ice is extremely variable and is deteriorating with the warming temperatures. There are a number of areas of open water and the remaining ice should be considered unsafe.

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

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

Most areas in the Lake Macbride District are unsafe for ice fishing. A few areas closer to Highway 20 may 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.

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### [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 905.26 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.

Most lakes are covered with a skim of ice. Predicted warm weather should get rid of the skim 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

## Big Creek Lake

As of Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Big Creek had large areas of open water. Some bays and the northwest arm had 6 inches of ice, but they could deteriorate fast with warm weather in the forecast. Little to no angling is occurring.

## **Boone District Farm Ponds**

**Bluegill** - Good: Ponds north of Highway 30 are holding 4 to 6 inches of ice, but anglers should be very cautious and check ice often.

## Don Williams Lake

**Black Crappie** - Good: As of Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the lake had 4.5 inches of ice and some angling was occurring. Crappies were being caught with waxies in the late afternoon and evenings. Warm weather for the weekend may change ice conditions; use caution and check thickness often.

Central Iowa ice conditions remain in poor condition, especially south of Highway 30. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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## Lake Anita

Ice conditions on Lake Anita vary from open water to 5 inches. All of the fishing is taking

place in the campground arm east of the road bed. Use extreme caution. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Reports of good crappie fishing straight south of fish cleaning station in 8 to 10 feet of water.

### Littlefield Lake

As of Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Littlefield only had 3 inches of ice. Ice fishing is not recommended.

### Prairie Rose Lake

Anglers are finding 5 inches of ice east of the beach on the north side of the lake. Use extreme caution. Ice conditions vary from open water to 5 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find quality sized bluegills east of the beach in 8 feet of water. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The late afternoon bite has been best for 10 inch black crappie.

Ice fishing is not advised on most lakes and ponds in the southwest district. A few reports coming from lakes in the northern part of the district. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.