



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 10.](#)

[**January Fishing Podcast**](#)

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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Winter community trout stockings start this Saturday.

Catch trout through the ice at one of our community trout fishing lakes - a great place to take kids to catch their first fish. Snap a photo of your child and their catch and submit it for a [First Fish certificate](#).

Plan your trout fishing adventure today - check the [winter community trout stocking schedule](#) for dates and details.

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Most remaining ice is unsafe for travel. Angling activity has occurred in open water from the inlet bridge and the fishing shelter on Ice House Point. Large areas of open water near Ice House Point and in the east basin. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills have been picked up from open water under the inlet bridge with a small jig tipped with waxworm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are being picked up near the inlet bridge. Use a small jig tipped with waxworm.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

No anglers have been out recently. Most of the main lake is open water. Ice is extremely variable in the northeast arm of the lake. Most remaining ice is unsafe.

[North Twin Lake](#)

There are large areas of open water on the lake.

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

Large areas of open water mid-lake and near the inlet. Reports of 8-9 inches of ice in the west end. Conditions are extremely variable. Use caution if venturing out on any remaining ice; wear float coats, bring picks and check ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons 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.

Many lakes in the Black Hawk district are unsafe for ice fishing. Several lakes still have some ice angling going on, but foot traffic only. Use caution and check ice thickness often; conditions are extremely variable with many areas of open water and thin ice. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Beeds Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. No fishing activity reported.

Blue Pit

The DNR will stock trout this Saturday, Jan. 12th. A kids fishing event will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches in the little lake. Use extreme caution if you venture out on the main lake as areas that were open water are starting to freeze over. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow using a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm. You have to keep moving 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.

Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. A fair number of 6-7 inch yellow bass and a few 9 inch crappies are being caught off the north shore of lake.

Lake Smith

Current conditions are unsafe due to wind and warm temperatures earlier this week.

Lower Pine Lake

Mostly open water.

Rice Lake

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

Upper Pine Lake

Ice fishing not recommended.

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 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.

Five Island Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Anglers report limited catches of black crappie and yellow perch; anglers will be pleased by the large size of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Some activity reported on the lake; you need to search to find active fish.

Lake Pahoja

Bluegill - Recent surveys show good numbers of angler acceptable size bluegill in the lake with large fish over 8 inches not uncommon.

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. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Yellow bass activity has picked up with good numbers of fish "on the bite."

Scharnberg Pond

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

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Extreme open water and thin ice conditions exists on the east side of the lake.

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 caught.

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.

Foot or ATV traffic at this time; no vehicles as of Jan. 10 on the lakes. Mild temperatures again are in the forecast for the Iowa Great Lakes. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Anglers are still out on backwaters. Use extreme caution as ice conditions can change fast. Edges may be soft in some areas. Ice fishing is not recommended. Water in Nashua impoundment fluctuated about 1 foot due to changes at powerhouse. Fishing may be slow until they adjust. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow below the dam.

Decorah District Streams

Stream clarity is excellent. Flows are high with rain and snow melt. Midges have been hatching on warmer sunny days. Trout are actively attaching these as they emerge. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Use larger flies or lures mimicking minnows. Spin fishers using a small jig tipped with a minnow should find nice fish. **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 are 8-10 inches. Wind increased the open water zone around the aerator; keep away from this area. Use caution on the ice. Water clarity is improved. **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 depth is 5 to 6 inches. Edges may get soft with warmer temperatures. Check ice depths often, especially near springs. Water clarity is improved. 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 not recommended; 3 inches of ice. Open water at the boat ramp and along shore around the dock. Use extreme caution; warmer weather and precipitation will weaken ice. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish the brush piles.

Ice conditions are unreliable. Use extreme caution; conditions will change fast. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Casey Lake (aka Hickory Hills Lake)

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

Few reports of anglers fishing the Cedar River. **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. **Brown Trout** - Fair.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

No reports this past week on the Maquoketa River; the river is falling.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

No reports this past week on the Shell Rock River; the river is falling.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

No reports this past week on the Wapsipinicon River; the river is falling.

Interior river levels are starting to fall after the recent rainfall. Ice conditions are poor; ice fishing is not recommended. The extended forecast looks good for making ice over the next couple of weeks. 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 is on a slight rise at 8.8 feet. . Backwater ice deteriorated quite a bit over the last week; many areas are unsafe. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Several reports of bass being caught on pole or tip-ups in backwater lake areas.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville is down to 15.2 feet, but is expected to rise slightly over the next week. Backwater ice deteriorated quite a bit over the last week; many areas are unsafe. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. Ice is not safe to cross at Sny Magill with the warmer temperatures and recent rain. Lower end of Bussey Lake still has unstable ice around edges. **Walleye**- Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Sauger** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **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 to 7.7 feet, but is expected to rise slightly over the next week. Backwater ice deteriorated quite a bit over the last week; many areas are unsafe. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. **Walleye** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Sauger** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes.

Backwater ice deteriorated quite a bit over the last week; many areas are unsafe. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. Protected areas have around 6 inches of ice; use caution around shorelines and areas

with current. Upper Mississippi River levels are expected to make a slight rise over the coming week. Ice flows in the main channel are making open water fishing difficult at the locks & dams.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels have bounced around this week, but are 6.8 feet reported at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.3 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Major ice flows at the tailwater is making boating nearly impossible. The tailwater may lock in and freeze this week. **Sauger** - No Report: No fishing was reported this week due to ice flows. Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular methods of catching walleye and sauger. **Bluegill** - Good: Not a lot of activity this week, but fishing has been occurring in some places with decent ice. Some reporting good fishing while others had issues catching fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Few reports of nice crappies mixed in with bluegills. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few yellow perch are being seen mixed in with bluegills and crappies.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water levels have bounced around this week, and are 8.4 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Major ice flows are occurring in the tailwater. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - Good: Boat anglers need to dodge ice flows all week. The ramp may lock in this week. 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 8.9 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 12.2 feet at Camanche and 6.7 feet at LeClaire. Ice flows are occurring in the tailwater. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. **Sauger** - Good: When anglers can successfully dodge ice flows, the walleye and sauger bite has been 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 10.1 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees.

Bellevue and Clinton tailwaters are open to angling, but ice flows have been occurring on a regular basis. Ice fishing is limited; 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 10 feet. Tailwater stage has risen some the past couple of days, but is forecast to start falling by Friday. Unsafe ice conditions. As of Jan. 10th, the Marquette St boat ramp was ice free. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rise in river levels.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 9.14 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater stage has risen some the past couple of days, but is forecast to start falling by Friday. As of Jan. 10th, the boat landing in Muscatine was ice free. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rise in river levels.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 11.01 feet at Lock and Dam 17 and is forecast to crest sometime today and start falling by tomorrow. 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.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 7.69 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has risen close to a foot since earlier this week. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater stage is forecast to start falling by Saturday. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the rise in river levels.

Tailwater stages have risen some the past couple of days. Unsafe ice conditions. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow with the recent rise in water levels and cold temperatures. Main channel water temperature is around 33 degrees. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Mostly open water until it gets cold again. Some of the bays still have some thin ice.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Open water and ice; not enough of either to do too much. North ramp is occasionally in open water, but not always.

[Lake Darling](#)

Afternoons and some mornings are mostly open water. Some colder mornings, the lake will be skimmed over with ice.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. A mix of open water and ice.

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

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level is at winter pool of 683.4 feet. The lake is ice free and very dirty.

[Grundy County Lake](#)

As of Jan. 9, the lake was 75 percent ice free.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

[Lake Macbride](#)

As of Jan. 9, the lake was ice free, with the exception of a portion around the main ramp/beach area.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

As of Jan. 9, the lake is virtually ice free north and east of the main ramp.

There is no safe ice in the Lake Macbride District. Most areas are partially to completely ice free at this time. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

Fishing pressure has been low.

[Lake Sugema](#)

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

[Lake Wapello](#)

Fishing pressure has been low.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 905.41 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.

There is no safe ice in the Rathbun district. Most lakes are covered with a skim of 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](#)

Thin ice with large areas of open water. No angling is happening.

Central Iowa ice conditions remain in poor condition with areas of open water. Ice fishing is not recommended. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

The trout stocking scheduled for Jan. 19th has been postponed until ice conditions improve or the lake has open water in March.

Lake Anita

No fishing reports from Anita this week.

Prairie Rose Lake

No fishing reports from Prairie Rose this week.

Ice conditions have not improved in the southwest district. Fishing is not advised. The Jan. 19th trout stocking at Big Lake in Council Bluffs has been postponed. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.