



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 7](#)

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](#)

There is around 14 inches of ice and 1-2 feet of snow near the boat ramp.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

The DNR stocked rainbow trout at Bacon Creek Lake on Feb. 16th.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The winter aeration system in Town Bay is in operation; beware of open water and thin ice in Town Bay. There is around 18 inches of ice with 1-2 feet of snow near the Ice House Point boat ramp. There is open water in the east basin near the outlet. Little fishing activity since last week due to the heavy snow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm in the rock piles out front of Gunshot Hill and off of Cottonwood Point.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Few reports last week due to weather. There is 1-2 feet of snow on the ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms fished on a small jig in 10-15 feet of water near structure in the

northeast arm of the lake. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Use a minnow and spoon near submerged structure. Try also waxworms on a small jig.

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

Most ice is 18-20 inches with 1-2 feet of snow. Avoid ice along pressure seams and near the big island. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons in the dredge cuts on the east side of the lake in about 8-12 feet of water and the west side in 6-10 feet of water. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try minnow head jigging spoons or waxworm on a small jig. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up keeper size crappie using minnows/jig.

Most ice in the Black Hawk district is 15 to 20 inches with 1-2 feet of snow. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

The lake is covered with several inches of snow. Local anglers have plowed a few paths on the lake for access. Please be courteous and don't park in the middle of the path blocking traffic. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow with a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm near the Baptist camp. 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** - Slow: Use a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** - Slow: Dead stick a minnow early morning or evening near the island.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 20 to 22 inches.

[Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

Ice thickness is 20 to 22 inches.

[Upper Pine Lake](#)

Access the lake from the boat ramp; the campground is closed due to deep snow.

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](#)

Yellow Bass - Fair: Anglers are catching yellow bass from the basin. Move often to stay on the school of active fish.

[Five Island Lake](#)

Yellow Bass - Good: Some activity reported on the lake; you need to search to find active fish.

[Lake Pahoja](#)

Bluegill - Good: 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 Bass - Fair: Yellow bass activity has slowed, but persistent anglers can catch good numbers of fish. **Black Crappie** - Good: Yellow bass anglers report crappie mixed in the catch.

Spirit Lake

Angler access at the north end of the lake. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish (8 - 9 inches) continue to be caught from the basin. Sorting is needed with numbers of small fish also in the catch.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Yellow perch continue to be harvested 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; best action is half hour before sunset to half hour after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Fish averaging 8 inches are common.

West Okoboji Lake

Angler access at the north end, Smith Bay and Emerson Bay. **Bluegill** - Good: Persistent anglers will catch good numbers of large bluegills.

Heavy snow on the Iowa Great Lakes is limiting access. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Decorah District Streams

Rain on top of already slick roads will make travel on gravel roads difficult. Road shoulders are hard to see. Use care traveling the back country. Spring is coming as daylight hours increase. Catchable trout stocking is just under a month away - check the [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) to find out when your favorite trout stream will be stocked. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Spin fishers using minnow imitating jigs will do well. In clear water, use a dark jig with a bright red spot. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Fish areas trout are seeking food and protection. Move a fly along a current break. **Brook Trout** - Fair: If you match the right insect hatch switch pattern. Midges are hatching now. Use grey or dark colors.

Lake Hendricks

About a foot of snow on 20 inches of ice. Open water around the aerator; use caution in this area. No motorized vehicles allowed here. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Lake Meyer

Ice depth is 20 inches covered with hard crusty snow. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow.

[Volga Lake](#)

Drifted snow covering 10 to 20 inches of ice. Few anglers have been out. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a spike or waxworm. **Bluegill** - Slow.

A wintry mix of precipitation forecast for the weekend with temperatures around freezing. Snow-melt will dirty the water and drop water temperatures. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Casey Lake \(aka Hickory Hills Lake\)](#)

Black Crappie - Slow: Find structure in the east side of lake near the dam. Use electronics to find suspended fish using a jig and waxworm. The few crappie caught are quality size.

[Lake Delhi](#)

Ice conditions are fair on Lake Delhi, but will most likely deteriorate fast with the rain predicted this weekend. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a jig tipped with a waxworm. Try finding suspended fish with electronics.

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

Walleye - No Report: Try a jig and plastic tipped with or without a minnow below Lake Delhi Dam.

[Martens Lake](#)

Anglers are accessing the lake from the north, crossing the reservoir on foot. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a jig tipped with a waxworm. Try finding suspended fish with electronics.

[Silver Lake \(Delaware\)](#)

There has been activity on Silver Lake. Anglers are catching some largemouth bass, bluegill and northern pike. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try fishing a jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Anglers have had success using tip-up rigs with a live shiner for bait.

Fishing reports are very few this past week; anglers are not getting out. Those who have been out are finding it to be a tough bite. 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 is 8 feet at Lansing. Avoid ice on shoreline edges and areas of current. Fish deep cuts above the Lansing bridge or in Shore Slough. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northrens are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill bite is best mid to late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Bass are biting on tip-ups in the deeper backwater

cuts; use larger active minnows. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level is 15.6 feet at Lynxville and is stable. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice. Avoid areas of current and shorelines. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill**- Good: Bluegill bite is best mid to late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Bass are biting on tip-ups in the deeper backwater cuts; use larger active minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level is 7.3 feet at Guttenberg. Ramps are frozen over at the dam. The bite is slow, but some nice perch are biting in Zollicoffer at Mud Lake near Dubuque. Avoid the springs and creek areas walking in as ice may be thin. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill bite is best mid to late morning and again late afternoon until sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Bass are biting on tip-ups in the deeper backwater cuts; use larger active minnows.

Fish are becoming more active with the longer days. The Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen this week; look for levels to rise as snow-melt occurs. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice and slush is forming with warmer daytime temperatures. Ice depth is 12 to 14 inches. Avoid ice in areas with springs and any current.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are 6.9 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.4 feet at the RR bridge. This is down from last week and is expected to be stable this week. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 34 degrees. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs with waxworms. Usually late winter bluegill fishing picks up quite a bit. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being caught on waxworms. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch are being caught mixed in with bluegills and crappies. Bigger yellow perch are usually caught in late winter.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water levels are 7.8 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 34 degrees. The Bellevue City boat ramp is open at times, but ice chunks are often present. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a three way rig with minnows or a jig and minnow. **White Bass** - Fair: Small white bass are often reported at Sabula and Browns lakes. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch are being caught mixed in with bluegills and crappies. Bigger yellow perch are usually caught in late winter. **Bluegill** - Fair: Late

winter is usually when the bluegill bite really picks up. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Paddlefish season is open. Please review [paddlefish regulations](#) before trying to snag for them.

Mississippi River Pool 14

Water levels are 6.4 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 10.6 feet at Camanche and 5.5 feet at LeClaire. Expect levels to be stable. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. **Sauger** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows. Poor weather conditions have limited fishing activity. **Bluegill** - No Report: Anglers are fishing all the usual spots, Joyces Lake Rock Creek and Cattail Slough. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Yellow perch are being caught mixed in with bluegills and crappies. Bigger yellow perch are usually caught in late winter. **Paddlefish** - No Report: Paddlefish season is open. Please review [paddlefish regulations](#) before trying to snag for them.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is 8.3 feet and is expected to stabilize. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. No fishing has been reported to us in Pool 15.

The tailwater are starting to open up a bit. Floating ice is an issue at most ramps. Ice fishing is going on throughout the district at the normal locations. When weather is nice, we have lots of anglers out. Water levels are dropping throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 8.29 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport and has risen close to 1.5 feet since Monday. As of March 7th, the Marquette St ramp is open, but there is some ice at the bottom of the ramp that could make launching boats difficult. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for walleye and sauger. Ramp and main channel conditions may change with rain and warm temperatures in the forecast. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports this week.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 6.44 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine has been rising. As of March 7th, there is some floating ice at the boat launch in Muscatine. There is also a lip of ice at the bottom of the ramp that could make launching a boat difficult. The parking lot in Big Timber is open, but use caution as the road and parking lot are ice covered. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. There could be unsafe ice conditions with fluctuating river levels.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 8.35 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston has risen close to 1.5 feet since Monday. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The Toolsboro ramp is still closed. The fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 5.45 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and has been rising. We have not

received any reports if boat ramps or the main channel are open. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

River stages have been rising since Monday. There is some rain and warm temperatures in the forecast that could cause the river to raise more. Rising river levels could create unsafe ice conditions, especially along the shorelines. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Ice conditions are good; use caution if it starts to rain later this week. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Anglers are catching mostly bluegills, but continue to pick up a few crappies. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill fishing picked up late last week. Work along the old creek channel out from the beach and the boat ramp.

Lake Belva Deer

The ice took some damage, especially around the edges from last weekend's rains. **Bluegill** – Slow: Fishing slowed after last weekend.

Lake Darling

The water has cleared up, but is still a little tinted by the clay. Ice is in good condition, but could change if the forecasted rain comes. **Black Crappie** - Slow: If you pick the right spot you can still catch your limit. **Bluegill** - Slow: Anglers are picking up some bluegills near the bottom.

Lost Grove Lake

Anglers are still concentrated from the middle boat ramp and pine grove on the lake. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Anglers continue to catch some crappies along the creek channel around the trees. Be prepared to move to find the fish. **Bluegill** - Slow: Most anglers are fishing in about 16 to 18 feet of water. Work the flooded trees along the old creek channel.

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

Diamond Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Fish the basin or around deeper brush for 8- to 9-inch crappies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch 7- to 8-inch bluegills with a jig/waxie around brush.

Hannen Lake

There is about 17 inches of ice here. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Quite a few 11+ inch fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Many fish are 8+ inches.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

There is about 15 inches of ice on most of the lake. Best bite is early and late in the day. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Lake Macbride has about 14 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigs/waxies fished over rock or brush. **Black Crappie** - Fair: 11-13 inch fish have been caught this week. Try fishing over rock piles or stumps. The south arm has been popular. **Walleye** - Slow: A few eater sized fish are being picked up by crappie anglers.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

Ice has been reported as close to two feet. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Use Small jigs/spoons or live bait. Most fish are 7- to 8-inches.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

There is about 16 inches of ice here. Fishing activity has been reported as slow.

[Sand Lake](#)

Sand Lake is in Marshalltown. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair: Fish up to 18 inches have been reported. **Bluegill** – Fair: Most were smaller this week. **Black Crappie** – Slow.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

Anglers are catching some bluegills and crappies. Use caution and check ice thickness often.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Ice thickness is 4-7 inches; use caution if venturing out. Most of the ice fishing in this area is occurring on the Tug Forks lakes northwest of Lake Sugema.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Use caution and check ice thickness often. Try jigs with small minnows or tipped with a waxworm. Anglers are catching some bluegills and crappies. Use caution in the area out from the lodge.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 905.28 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Ice thickness is variable, so use caution. The lake level continues to change with the thawing and freezing. Use caution around the shoreline when getting on and off the ice. Not many anglers have been out. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Anglers report 12 inches of ice. Warmer temperatures and rain may weaken the ice around the shoreline; use caution getting on and off the ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a waxworm or small minnow. Sorting is needed for larger fish.

Ice conditions in the Rathbun district are variable across the district; use caution if venturing out. 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 jigging spoons tipped with waxworms. Trout tend to swim close to the shoreline, so setup over water shallower than 15 feet. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Big Creek Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Use live minnows or waxies on glow jigs in the afternoons and evenings. Fish brush piles deeper than 15 feet and the edges of the roadbeds and creek channel mid-lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Try live minnows still fished and minnows or minnow heads on jigging spoons in creek channel edges, humps and roadbeds throughout the lake from the Marina to just south of the west boat ramp.

Don Williams Lake

Black Crappie - Good: Crappie fishing is good in the late afternoon and evenings. Fish mid-lake near creek channel edges, stumps and sunken habitat in 10 to 20 feet of water.

Hickory Grove Lake

The lake is drawn down around 9 feet, but good fishing is still possible. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch bluegills and crappies off brush piles with waxworms and minnows.

Lake Petocka

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use small jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or still fish live minnows. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Good ice conditions continue in Central Iowa. There is 18 to 20 inches of ice. 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)

Big Lake was stocked with 1000 rainbow trout on Feb. 9th. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use small jigs, minnows or waxworms. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Cold Springs District Farm Ponds

Large amounts of drifted snow has made access to ponds very difficult. **Bluegill** – Good. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

Lake Anita

Anglers report 18 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers report catching bluegill around brush piles. Fish average 8.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappies are being caught in tree piles close to the creek channel. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

Littlefield Lake

Ice thickness is 22 inches. Find fish around cedar tree piles placed in the lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Fishing is good for bluegill if you can get to a cedar tree pile. Sorting is needed for larger fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few large black crappie are being caught in the afternoon around cedar tree piles.

Nodaway Lake

No reports this week from Nodaway Lake. Anglers were finding fish in the brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Look for bluegills in the tree piles. Fish will average 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Late afternoon bite is best. Fish will average 10 inches.

Orient Lake

Orient has a good crappie population. Target the tree piles out from the dam. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find 10- to 12-inch crappies in the tree piles out from the dam. **Bluegill** - Good: Use waxworms in the tree piles. Fish will average 7.5 inches.

Prairie Rose Lake

Prairie Rose has good ice conditions. **Bluegill** - Slow: You may need to move around to find fish. Bluegill in Prairie Rose are quality size. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 10 inch crappie are being caught around the tree piles.

Viking Lake

Ice conditions are good at Viking Lake; anglers report 18 inches. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Target brush piles. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

Ice conditions remain good in the southwest district. Access is still difficult in some areas due to drifted snow, especially farm ponds. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

About 12-14 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie up to 8.5 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches using jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Little River Watershed Lake

About 7-14 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 12 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Summit Lake

About 12 inches of ice. Be cautious around the HWY 25 bridge as there may be areas of thin ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch Bluegill up to 8 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or near the creek channel.

Three Mile Lake

About 12-14 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleye up to 16 inches with minnows fished near the roadbed early and late in the day. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 9 inches using minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

About 12-17 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie up to 9.5 inches using jigs tipped with a minnow or waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions from 6-17 inches. Use caution and drill test holes. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.