



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



**Freeze time
with your favorite
fishing buddy.**

2020 fishing licenses on sale Dec. 15

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 12](#)

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

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake has skimmed over with thin ice. Look for conditions to improve next week. There are open water angling opportunities in the fish house on Ice House Point.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Little fishing activity to report. **Any ice is unsafe for travel.**

[North Raccoon River \(above State Highway 175 bridge near Auburn\)](#)

As anglers wait for ice conditions to improve, open water opportunities can still be found in rivers. Use chubs and twisters for walleye or cut bait for catfish fished in pooled areas below riffles.

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

Storm Lake has skimmed over with thin ice. Conditions are extremely variable; as of Thursday, Dec. 12, **ice fishing is not recommended**. Look for conditions to improve with colder temperatures next week.

Lakes in West Central Iowa have skimmed over but, as of Thursday, Dec. 12, **ice is unsafe**. Very few anglers have been out. Colder temperatures throughout next week

should improve conditions. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness ranges from 2 to 5 inches. Use caution near rush beds and areas with current. The west aeration system is in operation.

Rice Lake

The winter aeration system is in operation for the season. Waterfowl are keeping a few areas open. Use caution near any of these areas, especially on the downwind sides.

Silver Lake (Worth)

The winter aeration system is in operation for the season. **Bluegill** - Fair: Water clarity has been good; fish low light periods with small ice jigs and insect larvae.

Ice conditions are improving across northern Iowa. Use a spud bar and/or drill test holes when fishing this early season ice. For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

Spirit Lake

Anglers are just starting to head out on the ice; ice conditions range from 4-6 inches. Smaller bays are seeing the thickest ice; use extreme caution on the ice and check conditions often.

West Okoboji Lake

West Okoboji was the last lake to fully ice up, locking up Dec. 12. Use extreme caution when heading out on the ice; check ice thickness and conditions regularly.

Most area lakes are fully frozen, ranging from 1-6 inches. Smaller bay areas have the thickest ice conditions. Anglers are just starting to head out on the ice; use extreme caution. Review your safety plan and equipment, use flotation, and check ice thickness and quality often. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Anglers fishing back eddies and open water areas below dams are catching fish. Backwaters and slack water areas are frozen; going to these areas is not recommended. **Walleye** - Fair: Fish below dams or find deeper pools in the eddies. Use a hook tipped with a crawler or a jig with a twister tail or ring worm.

Decorah District Streams

Stocked fish remain in streams through the winter creating excellent angling opportunities. Trout streams with good flows stay open even during winter. Second shotgun deer season opens Saturday; wear bright orange and be visible to

hunters. **Brown Trout** - Good: Try a fly imitating small silvery fish. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use an ultra-light pole and reel for fun action. A worm fished under a bobber in slow water works well. Try a spinner in eddies and around structure. **Brook Trout** - Good: With fewer insect hatches, try using flies imitating minnows such as a wholly bugger.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Most of the lake is covered with ice. Open water around the aerator. **Not safe for ice fishing.** Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the ice. Park will be closed through the weekend.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Lake Meyer is frozen. **Not safe for ice fishing.**

[Turkey River \(above Clermont\)](#)

Backwaters and slack water areas are ice covered. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Motorized vehicles are not allowed on Vernon Springs impoundment when covered with ice.

[Volga Lake](#)

Volga Lake iced over Dec. 11. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Temperatures through the weekend in the low 30's for highs to single digits for lows. Many rivers have areas of open water. Use care when around areas with current. Trout streams are good to excellent. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

No reports on the Cedar River in Black Hawk and Bremer counties this past week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Manchester District Streams

Most streams have great populations of wild brown trout and catchable stocked rainbow trout.

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

No reports this past week on the Maquoketa River in Delaware County. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

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

No reports this past week on the Shell Rock River in Bremer and Butler counties. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

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

No reports on the Wapsipinicon River in Buchanan County this past week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve or troll crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Interior rivers are in good condition and continue to drop, but there have been no reports this past week. Opening second shotgun deer season this weekend; wear orange if on the rivers. Lakes and ponds are just starting to lay down ice; **ice fishing is not recommended**. All trout streams remain 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 8.5 feet at Lansing and expected to continue to fall slowly this week. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is 35 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Vertical jigging with twister tails or jig tipped with minnows has had the most success in Lock and Dams tailwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level is 17.5 feet at Lynxville and expected to continue to fall slowly this week. The ramp at Lynxville may be difficult to use because of ice flows. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is 35 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dams.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level is 8.1 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to continue to fall slowly this week. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. The DNR ramp has iced in, but make breakup with warmer weather. The city ramp may be difficult to use because of ice flows. Water temperature is 35 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dams.

Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen and are expected to continue to fall slowly. Many of the roller gates are now down which will help stabilize tailwater areas. A lot of new ice is flowing down the channel which will make fishing difficult; some ramps are starting to ice in. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is in the mid-30's.

Mississippi River Pool 12

The water level is 8.4 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10.7 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to recede over the next week. The water temperature is 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwater started icing up this week. **Sauger** - Good: Tailwater sauger fishing has started; most anglers are using a jig

and minnow. Lots of small sauger and small walleye are being reported. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Some crappies are being reported off Marina docks and backwater trees a few weeks back. No reports of catching crappie this week. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are pulling crank baits in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is 9.5 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is falling. The water temperature is 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. Tailwaters experienced significant ice flows this week. **Sauger** - Good: Most anglers are using a jig and minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being reported by anglers pulling double Rapalas.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 9 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 12.4 feet at Camanche and 6.8 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. River levels are expected to recede over the next week. Ice flows are being reported in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being taken on double Rapala rigs. **Sauger** - Good: Use a jig tipped with a minnow. Lots of small fish reported.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels are 9.8 feet at Rock Island and will fall this week. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. The water clarity is good.

Water remains high for this time of year, but levels are dropping. Tailwaters were receiving high fishing pressure, but now we have ice flows. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.12 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. Some boats have been out fishing in Sylvan Slough for walleye and sauger. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes by the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers by the Lock and Dam or in Sylvan Slough. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.41 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. River stage is 10.17 feet at Muscatine; flood stage is 16 feet. As of Dec. 12th, the boat ramp at Muscatine was open. A couple of boats have been out fishing, but we have received no reports on how the tailwater bite has been. The gates at the Lock and Dam are back in the water. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes by the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - No Report: Use jigs and minnows or pull three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 10.01 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. River stage is 10.57 feet at Keithsburg; flood stage is 14 feet. The Toolsboro landing is open. A couple of areas have shallow water over the

Toolsboro Road. The gates are out of the water at the dam. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for walleye and sauger.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 7 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is falling. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 12.39 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is 526.8 feet at Fort Madison; flood stage is 528 feet. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool.

Tailwater stages have been falling this past week. Main channel water temperature is around 32 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Open water and **unsafe thin ice.**

[Lake Darling](#)

Most of the lake froze over Dec. 11. Still some open water. **Ice thin and unsafe.**

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

Most of them froze over Dec. 10. **Unsafe ice thickness.**

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

A mix of open water and **very thin ice.**

[Skunk River \(Rose Hill to Coppock\)](#)

Ice has started to form on the river; chunks were floating on downstream Dec. 12.

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

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

Skim ice formed over most of the lake this week. The lake level will be lowered 3+ feet to winter pool over the next week; **ice conditions will be unstable.**

[Diamond Lake](#)

The lake is partially covered in skim ice.

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

Skim ice formed over most of the lake this week.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Skim ice formed over most of the lake this week.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Skim ice formed over most of the lake this week.

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

Skim ice has formed over the backwaters, **but is still unsafe**. The boat ramp in Pinicon Ridge is closed for the winter.

Most lakes/ponds now have skim ice; **there is no safe ice in this area**. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

Skim ice is forming overnight when cold enough, making fishing difficult.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Skim ice is forming at night, making fishing difficult.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South](#)

Trout were stocked on Oct. 25th. The pond is covered in skim ice, making fishing difficult. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 905.37 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. Most docks have been pulled out for the season and most campgrounds are closed. The bays and coves will start to be covered with skim ice, making fishing difficult.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Skim ice is forming overnight, making fishing difficult.

There has been very little angler activity in the last week. The district includes Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Wayne 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](#)

As of Dec. 12, there was still open water for anglers to fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, small plastic swim baits, or waxworms under a float. Most of the trout will be in the North part of the lake. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Ponds and small lakes in Central Iowa have started forming ice, but are still **unsafe for ice fishing**. More reports will be added when ice fishing starts. 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 \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Unsafe ice. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

There has been no fishing activity. Lakes are starting to skim over with ice. For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

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