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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

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Perfect Stocking Stuffer
for the Holidays!



2021 licenses on sale Dec. 15

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

Stay safe when fishing with these tips:

- Try a new fishing spot — if your regular fishing location is popular and busy, try out a new one that is not so crowded.
- Once you find your spot, keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other groups.
- Stick with your immediate family, but keep groups to fewer than 10 people.
- Bring lures from home instead of buying bait to minimize your interaction with other people.
- Bring hand sanitizer and wash your hands often.

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each district, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

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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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Most of the lake is covered with skim ice, but many areas along shore are now open. Open water fishing opportunities are at the fish house in Town Bay and at the inlet bridge. Target perch, crappie, and bluegill.

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

Most areas have skim ice. River levels are low; fish are concentrated in deeper holes.

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

Parts of the main lake had skim ice this last week. Some anglers are catching perch and crappie in the open water areas along shore and in the marina.

Most lakes in the district had skim ice last week; fishing activity has been limited. Ice is not thick enough for fishing; it is unsafe to walk on. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout are biting on a variety of baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice is not thick enough for fishing. **Walleye** - Slow: Try fishing the open water areas near the jetty.

[Lower Pine Lake](#)

The lake is partially covered with ice.

Upper Pine Lake

The lake is partially covered with ice.

Most areas lakes and rivers iced over this week. Ice is not thick enough for fishing. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is open. The water temperature is 37 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find schools in deeper water. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. **Yellow Bass** - Fair.

Lake Pahoja

Bluegill - Good: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try small jigs tipped with waxworms. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Use rubber worms or other slow-moving jigs.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Perch – Fair: Anglers are catching 9- to10-inch perch in 10 feet of water. **Walleye** – Fair.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Walleye – Fair.

Spirit Lake

The walleye season is open. Small perch have been caught from the north grade fishing pier within the open water. The water temperature is 32 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Good: Schools are starting to move out to deeper water around structure. **Walleye** - Fair: Try bottom bouncers or crankbaits to cover more water. **Yellow Perch** - Good: The bite has really picked up; fish are starting to be found closer to shore from accessible areas such as docks. Other areas to try are small humps in the main basin or weed edges.

West Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is open. The water temperature is 37 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Fair: Schools are deeper off shore. Try fishing in 20-30 feet of water off most points. Anglers have had success using pilkies. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Find smallmouth bass on rock piles or on the points. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Find largemouth bass on the weed lines. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Schools have started to move deeper off shore. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Easily find yellow bass while fishing for bluegill.

Iowa Great Lake water temperatures are around 37 degrees or lower with many areas starting to ice over. Walking out on the ice is not recommended; ice is not thick enough in most areas to hold a person. After this week, air temperatures are expected to be in the 30's to low 40's. All area hoists and docks have been pulled from the lakes to prepare for ice-up. The area bite has been slow lately. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports have been good to excellent for walleye on the Cedar River; concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very productive.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams in the Manchester District are in excellent condition. All three trout hatchery offices are still closed.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

No reports for the Maquoketa River this past week.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

Walleye - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish; concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very productive.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

Reports have been good to excellent for walleye and northern pike on the Wapsipinicon River, concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. Pike have been biting really well on portions of the Upper Wapsipinicon. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very

productive. **Northern Pike** - Good: Larger spinnerbaits are working well on the Upper Wapsipinicon River.

Interior rivers are in excellent condition and are providing excellent angling opportunities. Second season deer hunting season opens this weekend through December 20th; wear blaze orange and be aware of hunting activity. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information. All three trout hatcheries are closed; please call ahead to set up any appointments you need.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Pool level is 8.1 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable over the next week. Water temperature is 36 degrees. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with hair jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level at Lynxville is 14.6 feet and is steady. Water temperature is 37 degrees at the Lock & Dam. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tailwater level is steady near 6 feet. Water temperature is 34 degrees at the dam. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams.

Upper Mississippi River levels remain stable this week. Water quality has improved with fewer weeds floating downstream. Water temperature has dropped into the mid-30's with some skim ice forming in backwaters. Ice fishing is not yet recommended. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches long must be released immediately. Only one walleye greater than 27 inches can be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily harvest limit of 6 and possession of 12.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are expected to hold steady this week. The water level is 6.1 feet at the Lock and Dam and 8.6 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 36 degrees. The water clarity is good. Some ice formed on the backwater lakes this past week. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are being taken out of brush piles and marina areas on small jigs and minnows. Anglers are moving from log pile to log pile with 2 or 3 fish being taken from each. Ice is starting to form on backwaters with up to 2 inches of ice in some locations. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year.

Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level is 6.2 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is holding steady. Water temperature is around 37 degrees. The water clarity is good. Repairs are complete on the Bellevue City Ramp and it's open. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are being taken in backwater areas in fallen wood structure.

Mississippi River Pool 14

Water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is holding steady at 5.6 feet, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 5 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 37 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year. **Black Crappie** - Good: Look for brush piles in backwater sloughs. Most anglers are using small jigs, some tipped with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 15

Water level is 6 feet at Rock Island and is holding steady. The water temperature is near 37 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Walleye** - Fair: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the lock and dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year.

Water temperature is in the upper 30's. Water level is steady throughout the district. Tailwater walleye fishing is underway. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.07 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been falling the past few days. River stage is forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the lock chamber and in Sylvan Slough. **Sauger** - Fair: Some saugers are being caught downstream from the lock chamber. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.91 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. River stage is forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. **Walleye** - Fair: Some anglers have been out trying to catch walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Sauger** - Fair: Some anglers have been out trying to catch saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 5.35 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. River stage is forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been hit or miss. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the dam.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 2.79 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is falling. River stage is 8.97 feet at Burlington. River stage is 525.58 feet at Ft. Madison. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages had been falling but are forecast to stay steady through the weekend. River stages may change with rain and snow in the forecast. Main channel water temperature is 37 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been hit or miss. Backwaters are starting to skim over with ice. 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](#)

Some ice around the edges on the south side have survived the warmer temperatures. Weather forecast for the next few days should start making ice at night again.

[Lake Darling](#)

Most of the ice melted back off the lake, a little bit is still around the edges on the south side. Water temperature is in the low 30's. No report on fishing success. Docks at the boat ramps have been removed.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

A little skim ice remains around the edges. Look for more ice to start forming after today's (12/10) warm weather ends. The docks at the ramps have been pulled for the winter. The gates at the dam parking lot and down to backcast bay have been closed.

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

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake is at normal fall pool. Skim ice has been on some of the lake this week.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Any sized motor may be used at a maximum of 5 mph. A dock is available at the main ramp, along with a new boat slip at the main ramp and Opie Ave ramp. Water temperature this week was around 40 degrees. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Try soft plastics in 15-25 feet of water. Some fish are on the bottom while some are suspended under schools of shad. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging on or along rock in 10-20 feet of water. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Look for fish suspended over brush, stumps and

rock humps in 15-20 feet of water. **Muskellunge** - Fair: Troll stick baits or cast rubber baits in rock banks, points, and reefs.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The docks at main ramp and the bait shop ramp will stay in until ice up. Pit toilets are still available at main ramp. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigs/minnows in 15-25 feet of water on structure. **Muskellunge** - Slow: Try jerkbaits along the dam and over rock reefs, banks, and points.

Fishing reports have been scarce since the cool down. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Largemouth Bass - Slow: Try soft plastics fished slowly around structure. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a nightcrawler around structure. You might need to sort for larger fish.

[Lake Miami](#)

Bluegill - Slow: Use small jigs around structure. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try soft plastics around the cedar tree piles. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a minnow around submerged structure.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Black Crappie - Slow: Try jigs fish around submerged structure and the standing timber. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use soft plastics along the rip-rapped areas and the deeper structure.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Largemouth Bass - Slow: Try plastics fished slowly around the cedar tree structures. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a chunk of nightcrawler around the cedar tree piles.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South \(Trout Pond\)](#)

Skim ice is forming at night; shore fishing may be difficult with colder temperatures. Try small in-line spinners or jigs and twister tails for rainbow trout. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.07 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. The Corps of Engineers have pulled their boat docks and their campgrounds and ramps are closed. State owned ramps are still open. **Walleye** - Slow: Use jig and minnow combinations around rock piles, submerged points and areas with depth changes. **White Crappie** - Slow: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow around submerged structure.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Largemouth Bass - Slow: Try plastics fished slowly around submerged structure. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around deeper structure.

Very few anglers have been out. Skim ice is forming in the mornings on smaller water bodies and around the shorelines. 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](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Des Moines River \(Saylorville to Red Rock\)](#)

Walleye - Slow: Catch walleye during this low flow before ice-up by casting jigs tipped with minnows or soft plastics in pools with depths greater than 5 feet and very slow current.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast light weight in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float to keep above the aquatic vegetation. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Terra Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Lake Anita](#)

Lake Anita historically has provided good panfishing in the winter. Expect good bluegill fishing; you will need to sort for larger crappies.

[Lake Manawa](#)

The dredging project has provided excellent habitat to find fish this winter. Expect good numbers of black and white crappies plus good walleye numbers.

[Littlefield Lake](#)

Fisheries surveys from 2020 show good fish populations in Littlefield. Be prepared to find the cedar tree piles in the lake for best success through the ice.

[Meadow Lake](#)

Meadow will be a good ice fishing destination this year. It has a good population of 8-inch bluegill and 9-inch black crappie.

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose is a top pick for lakes with large bluegills. It also has a small population of large black crappies.

[Viking Lake](#)

Viking has a very good crappie population that will provide good fishing this winter.

Many lakes are skimmed over with ice. It's a good time to get the ice fishing equipment ready. For more information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.



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