



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 31](#)

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.

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## **NORTHWEST**

### Arrowhead Lake

Ice thickness at the boat ramp is 4-5 inches.

### Black Hawk Lake

Ice thickness is 6 inches in front of the Ice House Point boat ramp. Ice in the east basin is more variable and may have thinner areas. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often. Most angling activity has been near the Ice House Point boat ramp and near the Gunshot Hill shoreline. Ice is thinner in the inlet bridge bay. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching keeper-size fish; some sorting is needed. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Black Hawk Pits

Ice thickness is 5-6 inches near the boat ramp. Ice conditions are variable; use caution and check ice often. Anglers have just started making their way out. This is a good place to target bluegill, crappie, and yellow perch through the ice.

### Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Ice conditions are extremely variable. Some areas mid-lake have pockets of open water, while ice is up to 9 inches thick in other locations. Some areas may have recently frozen over with thin ice that are now hidden with snow. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often.

Ice conditions in the district are variable. Some lakes have pockets of open water, but may have up to 8 inches of ice in other places. Ice is snow covered and variable; use caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Beeds Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 6 inches. Waterfowl have kept a hole open on the northeast side of the lake. **Yellow Bass** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

### Bluebill Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 6 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are having luck catching decent-sized bluegill on a jig tipped with red spikes.

### Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 3 to 8 inches. There are several open water areas to avoid on the main lake. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a spikes. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Anglers fishing the Farmers beach area are catching perch in 2 to 6 feet of water on small jigs. You may have to use larger bait to catch the bigger fish. Use caution near the access and avoid the seams. **Walleye** – Slow.

### Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 3 to 5 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Anglers are catching lots of 3- to 7-inch fish. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Catch 5- to 8-inch yellows on small jigs tipped with a waxworm. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** – Slow.

### Lower Pine Lake

Ice thickness is about 7 inches off the boat ramp. Waterfowl have a large hole open

between the island and beach. Ice thickness can vary dramatically on Lower Pine Lake due to springs. Use caution and check thickness as you go.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness varies from zero to 7 inches. **Yellow Perch** – Slow.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 3 to 7 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair.

### Upper Pine Lake

Ice thickness is about 5 inches off the boat ramp. Ice thickness can vary dramatically on Upper Pine due to springs and slush covering the lake before good ice formation. Most anglers have stayed close to the west shoreline. Use caution and check thickness as you go.

For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### Dog Creek (Lake)

Fishing has been fair to good.

### East Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is open. Ice conditions vary across the lake with around 8 inches with some bad spots that have more recently frozen over in recent weeks; **ATV use is not recommended**. **Bluegill** - Good: Easily catch lots of bluegill; a lot of sorting may be needed with many 7.5- to 9-inch fish. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Good.

### Lake Pahoja

**Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with waxworms.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice conditions range from 5-10.5 inches. A good amount of fishing pressure has been seen recently. **Yellow Perch** – Good. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Minnewashta Lake

**Bluegill** - Good: Lots of 4- to 6-inch fish are being caught. **Black Crappie** – Good.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice conditions are around 8.5 inches, but are highly variable. Use extreme caution; a side-by-side went through the ice this week. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Spirit Lake

The walleye season is open. Ice conditions vary across the lake with 5-10 inches. Be wary out on the main basin with areas that have more recently frozen over; **venturing out on an ATV is not recommended**. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch fishing has been tough, but once you find them, many quality 9- to 10.5-inchers have been caught. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has been tough, but anglers have been able to limit out.

## West Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is open. West Okoboji was the last lake to fully ice up on Dec. 25. Ice conditions vary with 4-6 inches in the bays. Be wary out on the main basin as there are areas that have more recently frozen over; venturing far out is not recommended. Panfishing has been good in many of the bays where many anglers have been able to sight fish. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Good.

Iowa Great Lakes are fully iced up with conditions ranging from 5-10 inches. There are still many spots in the main basins that are somewhat freshly covered; use caution when going out. **The use of ATV's is not recommended.** Remember to bring a form of ice picks, a form of flotation, a friend, and be smart out on the ice! Through New Year's and this weekend temperatures should remain below freezing with highs in the upper 20's to low 30's. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## NORTHEAST

### Decorah District Streams

Iowa's trout season is open all year. Don't forget to [buy a new trout fee and license](#). Many streams maintain excellent populations of brown trout and stocked catchable-size rainbow trout. Many trout streams flow through wildlife management areas. Use care when parking along road if a parking area isn't plowed. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use hair jigs, spinnerbaits or small shallow water crankbaits for aggressive fish. Plenty of fish remain in streams over winter. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Avoid stepping on trout nests or redds; these are freshly cleaned areas on stream bottoms. Brownies may be slow to take bait. A keen eye and a fly box filled with a variety of sizes and colors will help match a hatch. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Walk around cleared areas in the stream bottom; these are trout nests or redds. Use small flies imitating midges or minnows. Please respect private property open to angling.

### Lake Hendricks

Lake is iced over except around the aerator. No motorized vehicles allowed on the ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a waxworm or spike on a small jig under a bobber. The bite is slow.

### Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is 5 to 2 inches with about 4 inches of snow. Excellent clarity with 12 feet visibility. Use caution when ice fishing; check depths often. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike on overcast days with excellent water clarity.

### Volga Lake

Lake has about 3 to 6 inches of ice capped with 6 inches of snow. Use caution when going on ice; check depths often. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike under a bobber fished around the brush piles.

Area rivers are partially frozen. Use caution in areas with current. Most lakes are iced over with a cap of 4-8 inches of snow. Ice thickness varies. Temperatures are low 20's to single digits at night. Ring in 2021 with a family outing. [2021 licenses are available](#)

[now](#). For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### [Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 8.1 feet at Lansing. Use extreme caution on snow covered ice as conditions can vary. Water temperature is 33 degrees. Ice thickness is variable from 4 to 6 inches. **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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow in 4 to 12 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with mousies in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Good: Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in shallow backwater lakes.

### [Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Lynxville water level is 14.8 feet. Water temperature is 34 degrees at the Lock & Dam. Ice conditions are variable from 4 to 6 inches on backwater lakes. Use caution on heavy snow cover as ice conditions vary. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow in 4 to 12 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Good: Try jigs tipped with mousies in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Good: Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in shallow backwater lakes.

### [Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Guttenberg tailwater level is near 6 feet. Water temperature is 32 degrees at the Lock and Dam. Ice anglers are catching panfish at Mud Lake. Use extreme caution with the heavy snow cover and avoid the creek area. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow in 4 to 12 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Good: Try jigs tipped with mousies in shallow backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Good: Try tip-ups baited with a minnow or shiners in shallow backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Reports of largemouth biting on tip-ups baited with minnows in backwaters.

Colder temperatures have increased ice thickness across Pools 9-11. Reports of 4-6 inches of ice in some backwaters; ice conditions are variable with the heavy snow cover. Avoid areas with any current as ice is unsafe. 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.

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

Water level is expected to rise this week. The water level is 5.9 feet at the Lock and Dam

and 8.5 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Ice is forming in most backwaters. Be cautious with ice conditions, especially now with snow covered ice conditions. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice conditions are marginal; it's a good time to get your safety equipment prepared for ice fishing season. Ice does not freeze well when covered with snow. **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 6.9 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is rising. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. 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. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice conditions are marginal; it's a good time to get your safety equipment prepared for ice fishing season. Ice does not freeze well when covered with snow.

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

Water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is rising at 5.6 feet, 9.9 feet at Camanche and 4.8 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 34 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. **Bluegill** - No Report: It's a good time to get your safety equipment prepared for ice fishing season. Ice does not freeze well when covered with snow.

### [Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is 6.1 feet at Rock Island and is rising. The water temperature is near 34 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 in the main channel is near freezing and water level is rising throughout the district. Tailwater walleye fishing is underway. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-880-8781.

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### [Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater stage is 6.13 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to stay fairly steady. The Marquette Street boat ramp is not accessible due to snow and ice is covering the ramp and parking lot.

### [Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater stage is 4.86 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to stay steady. As of Dec. 31, the ramp at Muscatine has been plowed but the parking lot has not. Ice on the ramp will make launching a boat difficult. Ramp conditions may change with more snow and freezing rain in the forecast.

### [Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater stage is 5.19 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston

and is forecast to stay fairly steady. As of Dec. 30, the Toolsboro road and ramp are snow and ice covered.

### Mississippi River Pool 19

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater stage is 2.71 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is forecast to stay fairly steady. River stage is 8.90 feet at Burlington. River stage is 525.70 feet at Ft. Madison. We have not received any tailwater reports or reports on boat ramp conditions for this pool.

Tailwater stages have risen close to a foot the past couple days, but are forecast to stay fairly steady. Main channel water temperature is 32 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Many of the boat ramps are not accessible due to ice and snow cover. **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

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Thin ice covered by snow with a thick crust.

### Lake Darling

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Ice was about an inch thick around the edges and less towards the middle on Dec. 29. Now covered with 4 inches of snow + thick crust on snow.

### Lost Grove Lake

**Unsafe ice conditions.** A little over an inch thick before 10 inches of snow fell.

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

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### Central Park Lake

The east end of the lake has 4-5 inches of ice; the west end has 3 inches or less. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often.

### Coralville Reservoir

The lake is at winter pool of 683.3 feet and is frozen over with **unsafe ice**.

### Diamond Lake

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The lake has about 2 inches of ice under the snow.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Most of the lake has 2-3 inches of ice.

### Lake Macbride

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The lake has 1-3 inches of ice; there is open water off the beach and Anglers Point.

### Otter Creek Lake

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The lake is frozen over.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The lake is ice covered. The protected areas of the west end may have a little better ice.

### Union Grove Lake

No ice depths are known; use extreme caution if checking ice conditions.

### Wapsipicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

Ice thickness is 2-3 inches on the Pinicon Ridge backwaters. A few anglers have been out. Some bluegills and crappies were caught; sorting is needed.

A lot of unsafe ice is hidden under the snow. Use extreme caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### Hawthorn Lake

Skim ice is starting to form. Target submerged habitat once the ice thickens up.

### Lake Miami

Skim ice is forming on cold nights. Be prepared to find the cedar tree piles for the best success once the ice is safe to fish on.

### Lake Sugema

Once the ice is safe to fish on, target underwater structures for the best success.

### Lake Wapello

Skim ice is forming along the shorelines and bays. The cedar tree piles will be the best place to target once the ice is safe to fish on.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

Skim ice is covering the pond, but is not thick enough to fish on. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.09 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. The lake is still open water with a little skim ice forming in the bays and along the shorelines. 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.

### Red Haw Lake

Skim ice is forming on cold nights. Be prepared to find the submerged structure for the best success once the ice is safe to fish on.

Very few anglers have been out. Skim ice is forming 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**



### [Big Creek Lake](#)

On Dec. 29, ice thickness was 2 to 3 inches with thinner spots on the main lake. Very little angling is occurring.

### **Boone District Farm Ponds**

As of December 29, farm ponds and community fishing ponds in Central Iowa were supporting some ice angling with an average ice thickness of 3 to 4 inches. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch a mix of bluegills and crappies in many community ponds. Check the [Fish Local webpage](#) for a list of public ponds where ice fishing is allowed.

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

**Walleye** - Fair: Cast jigs baited with shad imitating plastics or shiners below the Red Rock dam. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Cast jigs baited with shad imitating plastics or shiners below the Red Rock dam.

As of Dec. 29, most waterbodies in Central Iowa had 2 to 4 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.

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### [Lake Anita](#)

Lake Anita is holding a large number of geese keeping a portion of the lake open. The upper end of the pontoon arm has 4 to 5 inches of ice.

### [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](#)

Ice thickness is variable from 3 to 5 inches. Be prepared to find the cedar tree piles in the lake for best success through the ice. **Bluegill** - Fair.

### [Meadow Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Meadow Lake 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](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The lake is holding a large number of geese. Viking has a very good crappie population that will provide good fishing this winter.

Some ice fishing activity has begun in the northern part of the southwest district. Ice conditions are variable and not safe at all lakes. For more information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have 3-4 inches of ice. Areas of open water on some lakes. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.