



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 14.](#)

## December 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.

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## NORTHWEST

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Most areas around shore are covered with thin ice.

There has been limited fishing activity this last week. Area lakes are partially or completely ice covered. Ice is currently not safe for travel. More reports will be available when ice fishing

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

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### Clear Lake

The lake is about 80 percent ice covered. Ice thickness varies from 3 to 4 inches near shore to areas of open water. Most of the lake is unsafe to fish at this time. Use extreme caution and check thickness as you go if you decide to venture out.

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

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### Center Lake

**Black Crappie** - Slow: Good numbers of 10 inch and larger fish available for the upcoming ice fishing season. Fish the basin at dusk for the best action. **Bluegill** - Slow: Good numbers of angler acceptable size (6 - 7.9 inch) fish; persistence and patience will be rewarded with larger fish.

### East Okoboji Lake

North end of the lake is ice covered, south of Stony Point has poor ice conditions. No ice fishing activity has been reported.

### Five Island Lake

**Walleye** - Slow: Ice anglers will harvest good numbers of angler acceptable size and larger fish. **Channel Catfish** - Slow: Persistent anglers will find schooled up channel catfish which will provide plenty of pole bending action during the ice fishing season. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Ice anglers will continue to harvest large numbers of fish during the upcoming ice season with anglers noting the increase of larger size fish size approaching 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Ice anglers will note the influx of crappie approaching 9 inches; persistence and patience will be rewarded with larger fish.

### Lost Island Lake

**Walleye** - Slow: Ice anglers will continue to enjoy the upswing in the walleye fishery experienced during the 2017 open water season. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Ice anglers fishing for panfish should see an upswing to the fishery. Fish the deeper rock piles on the west side of the lake.

### Mill Creek (Lake)

**Black Crappie** - Slow: Good numbers of large black crappie available for the upcoming ice fishing season. Fish the north shore or the flat off the island for the best action. **Bluegill**- Slow: Good numbers of 6 - 8.5 inch fish available for the upcoming ice season.

### Scharnberg Pond

**Rainbow Trout** - Slow: 1500 rainbow trout were released here on Nov. 18th.

### Silver Lake (Palo Alto)

**Yellow Perch** - Slow: Good numbers of fish approaching 10 inches available for the upcoming

ice fishing season. **Walleye** - Slow: Recent surveys show good numbers of angler acceptable size fish available for the upcoming ice fishing season.

### Spirit Lake

Lake has skimmed over; many open areas still exist on the main body of the lake. No ice fishing activity observed at the north grade or anglers bay. Anglers have been ice fishing at Templar Park lagoon.

### Upper Gar Lake

Some ice fishing activity has been observed on the lake; ice thickness reported at 2 inches off the boat ramp.

### West Okoboji Lake

The lake remains ice free including Little Millers and Little Emerson bays.

### West Swan Lake S.W.M.A.

Black Crappie - Slow: Recent surveys show good numbers of crappie available for the upcoming ice season.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Two to three inches of ice on the backwaters. Use caution if going out on early ice. Check ice depths often, especially in areas with current. **Bluegill** - Fair: Brave ice anglers are catching a few fish in 10 feet of water. Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm or spikes. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use bright colored jigs or small spoons tipped with minnow heads in backwaters.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Second shotgun deer season ends Sunday. Many streams run through wildlife management areas where hunting is allowed. Wear bright clothing and make noise when not stalking a trout. **Brook Trout** - Good: Use a dry fly for insects hatching off the water surface. Use a nymph or scud dropper for subsurface critters. **Brown Trout** - Excellent: Use patterns imitating small fish, eggs, and scuds. Light hatches still occur on warmer afternoons. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Drift a feathered spinner or a hook tipped with worm along an undercut bank. Always leave gates and fences as you find them.

### Lake Hendricks

No motorized vehicles are allowed on the ice. Aerators are on. Use caution on newly formed ice.

### Lake Meyer

Open water in places; about 25 percent open. No anglers this week.

### Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

We have received no information regarding fishing on this water body this week.

## Upper Iowa River (below Decorah)

We have received no information regarding fishing on this water body this week.

## Volga Lake

Second season shotgun deer ends Sunday. No anglers out.

Ice angling is just around the corner. Cloudy with temperatures ranging from the mid 30's to low 20's through the weekend. Ice continues to form on area lakes. Area streams and rivers are freezing over in places. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER

## Mississippi River Pool 9

River level is 8.1 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable this week. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is near 32 degrees. Use caution accessing the ice as shorelines and sloughs still have some open water. **Walleye** - Fair: Try slow trolling crankbaits on a 3-way rig or minnow tipped jigs in tailwater areas and side channel rock structures. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use minnows in about 6-8 feet of water on side channel areas and backwaters vegetation such as marina areas. **Smallmouth Bass** - No Report: Smallmouth are actively feeding on abundant minnows along the main channel borders. Throw silver inline spinners or minnow imitation crankbaits. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are doing lots of sorting for larger bluegill. Use jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

## Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 14.6 feet at Lynxville and is predicted to bump up slightly. Water temperature at the Lock and Dam is 33 degrees. Many backwaters have formed ice, but many areas are variable with high winds opening up some areas. The Slough at Sny Magill ramp is not iced over yet. Anglers are catching bluegill on the upper end of Bussey Lake in the cut. Avoid the lower end of lake as ice is not stable. Park along the south side of causeway road and walk down from the upper end of Bussey. **Walleye** - Fair: Try slow trolling crankbaits on a 3-way rig or minnow tipped jigs in the tailwater areas and side channel rock structures. **Black Crappie**- No Report: Crappies are in backwaters just off side channels with slight current. Jig a crappie minnow in the stumps and fallen tree tops. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try minnows in about 6-8 feet of water on side channel areas and in the backwaters vegetation such as marina areas. **Smallmouth Bass** - No Report: Smallmouth are actively feeding on abundant minnows along the main channel borders. Throw silver inline spinners or minnow imitation crankbaits. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are doing lots of sorting for larger bluegill. Use jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

## Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level has fallen to 5.6 feet at Guttenberg tail-water and is predicted to rise slightly this week. Water temperature is 32 degrees at the Lock and Dam. Backwaters with no current have formed ice, but many areas of open water remain. Anglers are picking up some bluegills

through the ice at Zollicoffers at Mud Lake. Avoid walking near the creek area at Zollicoffer. **Walleye** - Fair: Try slow trolling crankbaits on a 3-way rig or minnow tipped jigs in the tailwater areas and side channel rock structures. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try minnows in about 6-8 feet of water on side channel areas and in the backwaters vegetation such as marina areas. **Smallmouth Bass** - No Report: Smallmouth are actively feeding on abundant minnows along the main channel borders. Throw silver inline spinners or minnow imitation crankbaits. **Sauger** - Fair: Use crankbaits or a jig tipped with minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are doing lots of sorting for larger bluegill. Use jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

Upper Mississippi River levels have been stable. Look for panfish to be in the deeper warmer water and out of current. Water temperature is at or near 32 degrees. Backwaters areas have around 2+ inches of ice, but ice is still variable in depth and many areas are still unsafe for walking.

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

Water levels have stabilized and are 5.2 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 35 degrees in the main channel. The first major ice flows of the season occurred this week. Backwater are marginally thick for fishing. Heavy winds opened up some previously frozen areas. **Walleye** - No Report: This fall was a good season for walleyes on Pool 12. Some fishing will return if ice flows decrease. **Sauger** - No Report: This fall was an excellent year for sauger fishing. Lots of nice sauger were reported. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Yellow perch fishing was strong in the tailwaters and some should be found ice fishing this winter.

### [Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels receded this week and are around 5 feet at Bellevue Lock and Dam. We may have a slight bump in the water level this upcoming week. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 35 degrees in the main channel. The first ice flows of the season occurred at Bellevue, but both ramps remain open for now. **Walleye** - No Report: Very little fishing this week due to the weather. This fall was generally good for slot walleyes. **Sauger** -No Report: Sauger fishing was very good this fall. Lots of nice fish were reported and fishing pressure was heavy. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Yellow perch fishing was very good in the tailwaters this fall and they should find their way into the backwater lakes.

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

Water levels receded all week and should remain somewhat steady. Gauge readings are 4.7 feet at Fulton, 9.4 feet at Camanche and 4.5 feet at LeClaire. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 35 degrees in the main channel. No fishing was reported to us this week.

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

Water levels receded all week and are 5.1 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 36 degrees in the main channel. No fishing was reported to us this week.



The water is at normal winter lows, but it may come up a bit this week. The water temperature is around 35 degrees in the main channel and ice is floating at Dubuque and Bellevue. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

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

Tailwater stage is 5.53 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. **Sauger** - Slow: Sauger fishing below the dam has been slow. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

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

Tailwater stage is 4.37 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. **Sauger** - Slow: Sauger fishing below the dam has been slow. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

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

Tailwater stage is 4.83 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. **Sauger** - Slow: Tailwater fishing has been slow. Vertical jig with minnows or pull three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

### [Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 2.56 feet at Lock and Dam 18. **Sauger** - Slow: Vertical jig with minnows or pull three-way rigs with minnows or stickbaits.

Main channel water temperature is around 33 degrees and water clarity has been fair. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers, but the bite has been slow. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## SOUTHEAST

### [Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake level as is 686.4', which is fall pool. Wednesday the lake was open; Thursday morning it was skimmed over. Based on the forecast, the lake should have open water this weekend and into next week.

### [Lake Macbride](#)

All sized motors may be operated at no-wake speed. The fish cleaning station is shut down and docks have been removed. Wednesday the lake was ice free; Thursday morning had skim ice. Based on the forecast, the lake should have open water over the weekend and in to next week.

### [Otter Creek Lake](#)

Skim ice comes and goes with the weather.

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still 10 feet low from the restoration project. The lake has some skim ice in the

coves. The lake should have open water for at least the next week.

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

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### Lake Miami

Fishing pressure has been low with the colder temperatures. Skim ice is starting to form around the edges of the lake, but the wind is hindering any progress. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms around brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Use rubber worms and crankbaits around the fishing jetties and brush piles. Target structure along the rip-rapped shorelines.

### Lake Sugema

Fishing pressure has been low with the colder temperatures. Skim ice is starting to form around the edges of the lake, but the wind is hindering any progress. **Walleye** - Slow: Use minnows fished under a bobber. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms around structure along the shorelines and in deeper water. Sorting is needed for larger fish. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use a rubber worm or jig n pig combo around structure and areas around the jetties.

### Lake Wapello

Fishing pressure has been low with the colder temperatures. Skim ice is starting to form around the edges of the lake, but the wind is hindering any progress. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Try rubber worms or jig n pig combos around the brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with live bait around submerged structure. Sorting may be needed for larger fish.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South

Trout were stocked in October. Use small tube jigs, small twister tails, in-line spinners, casting spoons and live bait under a bobber. Be prepared for some skim ice around the pond edge.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.24 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. All docks and the fish cleaning stations have been removed for the year. The ramps at the Rathbun marina are closed for the season. **White Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs or jigs tipped with live bait along the rip-rapped shorelines. **Walleye**- Slow: Try crankbaits or nightcrawlers in areas with variations in depth.

### Red Haw Lake

Fishing pressure has been low with the colder temperatures. Skim ice is starting to form around the edges of the lake, but the wind is hindering any progress. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm around structure. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try rubber worms in areas with rip rap or other types of structure.

Surface water temperatures in the Rathbun district lakes are in the 30's. 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**

### **Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)**

Walleye - Fair: Anglers fishing below the dams and deep, slow water on nicer days are still picking up a few walleye in the evenings casting twister or paddle tail jigs.

More fishing reports will be available when ice fishing begins. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

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### **Farm Creek Lake**

Farm Creek supports quality size bluegills and crappies.

### **Greenfield Lake**

Greenfield Lake has a good fish population. The lake is 3 feet low.

### **Lake Anita**

Lake Anita will provide good fishing this winter. Find a large crappie population averaging 9 inches and bluegills up to 9 inches.

### **Littlefield Lake**

Littlefield has quality size panfish and will be a good ice fishing destination.

### **Meadow Lake**

Meadow lake bluegills have gained size and body condition after the mid-summer draw-down in 2016. There is a year class of 10 to 12 inch black crappie in the lake at this time. Meadow will be a good ice fishing destination.

### **Prairie Rose Lake**

Expect to catch quality size bluegills again this winter. The crappies are averaging 9.5 inches and are healthy.

### **Viking Lake**

Viking has a good population of crappies. Black crappies will average 9 inches and the white crappie are 10 to 12 inches.

There has been no angling activity this week. The extended weather forecast looks like ice will start to form next week. Many of the small impoundments in the Cold Springs District have good crappie and bluegill populations that offer good ice fishing. For more information, call the Cold Springs District Office at 712-769-2587.