



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 28.](#)

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

As of Dec. 28, ice was about 2-4 inches thick, but highly variable. Use extreme caution if venturing out and check ice often. Cold temperatures over the weekend will build more ice.

Black Hawk Lake

As of Dec. 28, ice thickness near Ice House boat ramp was 4-6 inches, with less ice right off of Ice House point and in Town Bay. There was a small pocket of open water in the northeast part of the lake near the state marina. Expect more ice as temperatures drop throughout the week. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch 7-8 inch gills with a teardrop jig and waxworm fished off the bottom around 6 feet of water in the channel between Ice House boat ramp and Gunshot Hill. The rock pile off of Gunshot Hill has also been productive. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few larger fish are being picked up while targeting bluegill. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up crappie while targeting bluegill. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a spoon and minnow fished on the dredge cuts near Denison Beach and Lake wood point, and near the rock pile off of Cottonwood Point.

Black Hawk Pits

As of Dec. 28, ice was about 2-4 inches thick, but highly variable. Use extreme caution if venturing out and check ice often. Cold temperatures over the weekend will build more ice.

Brushy Creek Lake

A few anglers have been out on the north end. As of Dec. 28, ice thickness on the north end was reported at 4-5 inches. Ice near shore, in the main part of the lake, and in the south end is likely thinner and unsafe at this time. Expect ice conditions to improve over the next week. More reports will be available as more anglers make their way out.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Anglers are making their way out onto the ice; use extreme caution and check ice often due to the highly variable conditions. As of Dec. 28, most ice is around 5-7 inches, but there are some small pockets of open water and thinner ice. **Walleye** - Good: Use a minnow and spoon fished in the dredge cuts; best luck during low light conditions.

Ice fishing is underway in Western Iowa. As of Dec. 28, ice thickness varies from a few pockets of open water to areas with up to 7 inches of ice. Use extreme caution when venturing out and check ice often. Cold temperatures throughout the week will build more ice. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Bluebill Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow: Best bite is in the early morning.

Clear Lake

Avoid areas near the aerators. The current ice thickness varies from 6 to 10 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with live bait at the edge of the vegetation. The best bite is at dawn and dusk. **Walleye** – Slow: Dead stick a minnow while your jigging with another

rod. The best bite is at dawn and dusk. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with live bait. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Best bite is at first light.

Crystal Lake

Avoid areas near the aerator. Ice thickness is 6 to 9 inches. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with spikes near the edge of the dredge cut. **Walleye** - Slow: Best bite is early morning fishing with a minnow.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. **Walleye** - Slow: The best bite is at dawn and dusk fishing with minnows.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Avoid areas near the aerator. Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike at the edge of vegetation. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike at the edge of vegetation.

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

No fishing activity observed on the lake.

Five Island Lake

Channel Catfish - Fair: Good ice fishing action reported. **Walleye** - Fair: Ice anglers have had good pole bending activity with numbers of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Good numbers of fish have been harvested; fish the dredge cuts for the best action.

Ingham Lake

Walleye - Fair: Good bite reported during the early evening hours.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Fair: Good numbers of fish are being caught; fish the Stoney Point area for the best action. **Walleye** - Fair: Numbers of fish are reported from Lost Island Lake.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto)

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers report harvesting walleye. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Ice anglers are catching yellow perch.

Spirit Lake

Ice conditions have improved. Anglers have branched out on the main basin of the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Good numbers of bluegill are being reported at Templar Park lagoon, but fish are very finicky. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Black crappie action has slowed at the Templar Park lagoon. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Numbers of fish are being caught off of Marble Beach; sorting is needed as numbers of small fish are being reported.

West Okoboji Lake

With improved ice conditions, anglers are fishing on the north end of the lake, Little Emerson, Little Millers Bay and Smith Bay. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some bluegills have been caught; a camera

is needed to find fish as site fishing is limited. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Action has been reported after sunset in Little Millers Bay.

Ice conditions have improved on the Iowa Great Lakes. Single or negative temperatures are in the forecast for the upcoming week. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions are improving, but use caution. Check ice depths often, especially in areas with current. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm or spikes in 10 feet of water. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use bright colored jigs or small spoons tipped with minnow heads in backwaters.

Decorah District Streams

Parking lots are not plowed this time of year. 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** - Good: 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. Ice conditions are improving. Aerator is on and open water is visible around it. Geese are keeping this area open. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Water is stained. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are fishing near the point in the deeper channel. Use small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes.

Lake Meyer

Lake Meyer is completely covered with ice. Use caution around the dam. Check ice depths often. Ice depths are about 8.5 inches. A few anglers were out this week. Clarity is excellent. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small bright colored jigs tipped with waxworms. A slow jig works best. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Anglers need to work for the fish and may have to move once the easy ones are caught.

Volga Lake

Ice depths are variable, but no open water. Check ice depths often and use the buddy system. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish over cedar trees. Drop your lure about 3 feet above structure and watch them swim up to the bait. Use small jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms.

Temperatures will be in the single digits through the weekend. Ice conditions are improving, with many water bodies completely covered. Iowa residents may now buy fishing licenses for the upcoming season. Thanks to all our anglers this year. May your angling in 2018 be the best yet. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-

Casey Lake (aka Hickory Hills Lake)

Some good reports of anglers catching bluegill on Casey Lake. Concentrate efforts near the deeper area of water near the dam close to brush pile structures. **Bluegill** - Fair: Fish a waxworm just off of the bottom near the deeper portions of the lake.

Plainfield

Reports are fairly slow on Plainfield, but bluegill are good size in this lake. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish a waxworm just off of the bottom near the deeper portions of the lake.

Silver Lake (Delaware)

Reports have been slow on Silver Lake. Anglers are setting tip-ups for pike without much success. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try fishing a waxworm just off of the bottom in the deeper part of the lake near the outlet structure for 6 to 7 inch bluegills.

Interior river water levels remain excellent and reports have been very limited with frozen conditions. Bitter cold weather conditions have made for good ice thickness on most areas; use extreme caution when venturing onto ice. Anglers are just beginning to get out, but reports have been limited. Northeast Iowa 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 has been fluctuating slightly and current level is 7.8 feet at Lansing. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is near 32 degrees. Subzero temperatures have ice building; continue to use caution accessing the ice as shorelines and sloughs may be unsafe. **Walleye**- Slow: Try slow trolling crankbaits on a 3-way rig or minnow tipped jigs in tailwater areas and side channel rock structures. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some reports of yellow perch being caught on minnows or small jigging spoons through the ice. **Sauger** - Slow: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 15.1 feet at Lynxville. The Slough at Sny Magill ramp is forming ice, but crossing is not yet recommended. 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** - Slow: 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: Some reports of yellow perch being caught on minnows or small jigging spoons through the ice. **Sauger** - Slow: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are

catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level at Guttenberg tail-water has leveled off near 6 feet. Water temperature is 32 degrees. Backwaters are building ice this week. Anglers are picking up panfish through the ice at Bertom and at Zollicoffers in Mud Lake. Avoid walking near the creek area at Zollicoffer. **Walleye** - Slow: 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: Some reports of yellow perch being caught on minnows or small jigging spoons through the ice. **Sauger**- Slow: Use crankbaits or a jig tipped with minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas and deeper side channels. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice anglers are catching bluegill. Use small teardrop jigs tipped with waxies in 4-5 feet of water with no current.

Upper Mississippi River levels are at normal winter levels after a slight bump this week. Look for panfish to be in the deeper warmer backwaters with no current. Water temperature is 32 degrees. Backwater areas are building ice this week. Use caution near flowing sloughs and creeks or spring areas.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels rose all week and is 6.7 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.2 feet at the RR bridge. Expect water levels to start to recede this week. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 33 degrees in the main channel. Expect ice flows this week. **Walleye**- Slow: This fall was a good season for walleyes on Pool 12, but it has been slow lately. **Sauger** - Slow: Sauger fishing was slow this week, but it has been an excellent year for sauger fishing at Dubuque. Lots of nice fish were reported this fall and good fishing could return anytime. **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 have crested from a minor bump this past week and Bellevue Lock and Dam is currently around 7 feet. Expect water to recede slowly all next week. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the main channel. As of Saturday, both the DNR ramp and the City ramp are ice free, but expect significant ice flows when cold temperatures hit. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger fishing was very good this fall. Lots of nice fish were reported and fishing pressure was intense at times. Lately a few flurries of good fishing were reported, but in general fishing was slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch fishing was very good in the tailwaters this fall and a few nice fish were still reported this week but it has tailed off.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are nearing the peak from a minor water level bump. Gauge readings are 6.4 feet at Fulton, 10.4 feet at Camanche and 5.1 feet at LeClaire. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the main channel. **Sauger** - No Report: Lots of angling for sauger was reported, but no word on if the fish were biting.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels have risen all week and are 6.7 feet at Rock Island. Water will continue to rise

for a day or two and then start to recede. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is near 33 degrees in the main channel. **Sauger** - No Report: Some angling was reported this week, but no indication on if they were successful or not.

The water is at normal winter lows and levels are peaking out from a minor bump this past week. The water temperature is around 33 degrees in the main channel. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 6.06 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been rising the past few days. The Marquette St. boat ramp is frozen in. Unsafe ice conditions.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 4.33 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been rising slightly the past few days. The boat ramp in Muscatine is frozen in. Unsafe ice conditions.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 4.65 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been rising the past few days. Reports of flow ice coming down the channel. Unsafe ice conditions.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 1.93 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and has been falling the past few days. Unsafe ice conditions.

Main channel water temperature is around 32 degrees and water clarity has been fair. The main channel is locking up with ice and boat ramps are freezing in. Unsafe ice conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

The ice on the lake was between 2 and 3 inches Wednesday afternoon. No fishing activity on the lake. On the ponds in the park, anglers were finding between 4 and 5 inches of ice.

Lake Belva Deer

The cold weather the last couple of days put some ice on the lake; about 5 inches as of Wednesday afternoon.

Lake Darling

The lake was pretty much wide open over the weekend. It Froze over on Monday; between 2 and 3 inches on Tuesday. After cold weather on Tuesday night and Wednesday, ice should be 4+ inches. One person was out on Tuesday, none on Wednesday.

Lake Geode

The lake is drained for renovation.

Lost Grove Lake

The last three days have been building up the ice. Ice thickness is around 5 inches, but drill some test holes to be safe especially down around the dam.

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

Coralville Reservoir

As of Dec. 28, the lake is ice covered. There were still a few seams of open water on Dec. 26th out in the channel, most notably, from the Macbride ramp upstream to Bobbers Marina, as well as under Mehaffey Bridge. The lake level as is 683.6' and falling. It is predicted to reach winter pool of 683.4' by the weekend. This falling water has increased current and made ice more variable in the channel.

Lake Macbride

As of Dec. 28, the entire lake is ice covered. There was considerable open water as of the 26th. Much of the shoreline has 4-6 inches of ice, but areas of deeper water may have considerably less ice. The area out from the main ramp in the park, east to the beach, north to the powerlines, and north of there has the least amount of ice. As of Dec. 28, these areas are not safe. Use caution when venturing out over deeper water.

Pleasant Creek Lake

The lake is still 10 feet low from the restoration project. The lake is reported as having 5 to 8 inches of ice. A lot of people have been out here fishing. **Walleye** - Fair: Try minnows or spoons tipped with minnow heads. Many fish are being caught in deep water. Remember that fish caught from as little as 20 can have their air bladders expand out of their mouth if brought up too quickly. There are lots of small walleyes in the system that may not survive releasing if their air bladder is compromised. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs and waxies along the dam. **White Bass** - Slow: A few fish are being caught suspended in deeper water with spoons.

As of Dec. 28 most lakes have ice. The smaller bodies of water have fishable ice for the most part, and the larger lakes have areas of fishable ice. Use caution when heading out on the ice, especially for the first time. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Lake Miami

Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out on the ice.

Lake Sugema

Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out on the ice.

Lake Wapello

Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out on the ice.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.12 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. The ramps at the Rathbun marina are closed for the season and all the campgrounds are closed. Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out on the ice.

Red Haw Lake

Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out on the ice.

Most of the waterbodies in the district have some ice, but conditions will vary so use caution if venturing out on the ice. 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

Beaver Lake

Bluegill - Good: Beaver Lake has a good bluegill fishery to target through the ice. Bluegills over 8-inches are possible. Start by fishing the flooded timber mid-lake and on the drop-offs around the deepest portion on the northeast portion of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: There is a good crappie population with the largest fish just over 10 inches. Fish glow jigs with waxworms or live minnow rigs in the evenings and just after dark in the flooded timber.

Big Creek Lake

As of Dec. 28, ice conditions vary from thin spots in the center of the lake to 4-6 inches at common access points. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Very little angling effort has been spent at Big Creek so far as ice conditions improve. Fall sampling showed good numbers of 10 plus inch crappies that will be well worth some time to find.

Dakins Lake

Bluegill - Good: Anglers are getting on Dakins and catching some good bluegills in the timber.

Don Williams Lake

Black Crappie - Good: Anglers fishing the early ice at Don Williams are catching crappies suspended 10-15 feet down in 20-30 feet of water. Two size ranges are being caught. Anglers have to fish through the 5-7 inchers for the 8-10 inch fish.

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve Lake (west)

Bluegill - Good: Krumm is a popular ice fishing destination for its good size bluegills and crappies. Anglers are getting into some early ice bluegills.

The ice fishing season has begun in Central Iowa. Anglers are just starting to get out. More information will be added as angling reports increase. Ice thickness is highly variable from

small ponds to the larger lakes with thicknesses from thin to 8 inches observed as of Dec. 28. Use caution and check ice thickness frequently. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

Lake Anita

Anglers are accessing the lake in the far east end where there is 4-inches of ice. The main lake has less ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A few crappies (9-10 inch) are being caught over the old creek channel in the far east end of the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: A few bluegills are being caught on jigs tipped with a waxworm in the east end of the lake.

Lake Manawa

Anglers are accessing parts of the lake and reporting 3 to 5-inches of ice. Lake Manawa has a walleye, wiper, and crappie population that should provide some fishing through the ice this winter. **White Crappie** - No Report: Twelve inch white crappies were sampled in the lake last fall. **Walleye** - No Report: Lake Manawa receives an annual walleye stocking that has produced a good population in the lake. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - No Report: Wipers are stocked into Lake Manawa each year.

Littlefield Lake

There has been no ice fishing activity at Littlefield to date. There was 4 inches of ice off the beach on the south side on Wednesday. **Bluegill** - No Report: Bluegill fishing through the ice at Littlefield Lake has been good in 2015 and 2016.

Meadow Lake

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Bluegill** - No Report: Meadow Lake has 8 inch bluegill. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Quality size crappies were sampled last fall.

Prairie Rose Lake

We have received no information about fishing on this water body this week. **Bluegill** - No Report: Quality size bluegills are available. **Black Crappie** - No Report: A year class of crappies is present in the lake and should boost the fishing this winter.

Ice fishing in the Cold Springs District is just getting started. There are limited places for anglers to safely get out on the ice. Use extreme caution as ice thickness is not uniform across our water bodies. For more information, call the Cold Springs District Office at 712-769-2587.

Little River Watershed Lake

Little River has 3.5-4.5 inches of ice. Geese are keeping some areas of open water, especially north of the Paul Vonn ramp, in the campground bay, and north of the dam. Use extreme caution and drill many test holes. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch black crappie up to 10 inches with jigs or minnows fished near creek channels or in the trees. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleye up to 22 inches using jigs or minnows fished near creek channels or in the trees.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have up to 5 inches of ice. Drill many test holes and check ice thickness often. Geese are keeping some areas of lakes open. Limited ice fishing activity has been observed this week. For more information, please contact the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.