



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 17.](#)

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](#)

On Jan. 16th there was 5 inches of ice near the boat ramp.

Bacon Creek Lake

About 1500 rainbow trout will be stocked into Bacon Creek Lake on Jan. 26th at 1:30 p.m.

Black Hawk Lake

On Jan. 16th there was 7-8 inches of ice off the boat ramp of Ice House Point. Be aware of open water near Ice House Point, Denison Beach area, and in the east basin near the outlet. Conditions are improving, but they are still variable throughout the lake; look out for thin areas that may have just recently frozen. Check ice thickness often. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills have been picked up through the ice in between the boat ramp of Ice House Point and Gunshot Hill with a small jig tipped with waxworm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie are being picked up near the inlet bridge and through the ice near the Ice House Point boat ramp. Use a small jig tipped with waxworm. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being picked up in between the Ice House Point boat ramp and Gunshot Hill with jigs tipped with waxworm.

Black Hawk Pits

On Jan. 16th there was 4 inches of ice near the boat ramp.

Brushy Creek Lake

Anglers are fishing near the north boat ramp and in the northeast arm of the lake. There has been some activity near the south ramp and around the big island. All other ice is variable. As of Jan. 16th there was open water near the beach and in the main lake. Be cautious of thin areas that recently froze over. Ice conditions will likely improve over the weekend; check ice thickness often. Float coats and ice picks are always good safety items.

Moorland Pond

The trout stocking and family fishing event at Moorland Pond has been rescheduled for Feb. 9 at 11:30 a.m.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Most of the lake has around 9-13 inches of ice. Be aware of a pressure seam running along the west portion of the lake and an open area near the big island. Use caution if venturing out and check ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons during low light conditions. Anglers have had better luck on the east side of the lake. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try waxworms in 4-6 feet of water in mornings or evenings.

Ice conditions have improved in the Black Hawk district, but still varies from open water in some areas to 10 inches of ice in others. Use caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

The DNR stocked trout Jan. 12th.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches in the little lake. Use extreme caution if you venture out on the main lake as areas that were open water are starting to freeze over and are now covered with snow. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow using a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm. You have to keep moving to stay on fish. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Lots of small fish are being caught. If you're not going to use the fish you catch, please release them. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** – Fair: A few walleyes are being caught fishing the rock reefs. Best bite is early morning and evening.

Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. A fair number of 6-7 inch yellow bass and a few 9 inch crappies are being caught off the north shore.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 10 to 11 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Best bite is early morning and evening. You have to keep moving to find fish. **Walleye** - Slow: Dead stick a minnow while you're jigging for panfish.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. Bluegills are biting on small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes. Best bite is in the evening.

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

Ice fishing activity has been concentrated on the south end of the lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish are being caught; sorting is needed with small fish mixed in the catch. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Move often and drill many holes to stay on the school of active fish; sorting is needed.

Five Island Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Anglers report limited catches of black crappie and yellow perch; anglers will be pleased by the large size of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Some activity reported on the lake; you need to search to find active fish.

Lake Pahoja

Bluegill - Recent surveys show good numbers of angler acceptable size bluegill in the lake with large fish over 8 inches not uncommon.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Report of fish being caught from the lake with "bonus mixed bag" of bluegill and crappie in the catch. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Yellow bass activity has picked up with good numbers of fish "on the bite."

Scharnberg Pond

The trout stocking and family fishing event has been rescheduled for Feb. 2 at noon.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Extreme open water and thin ice conditions exists on the east side of the lake.

Spirit Lake

Walleye - Good: Angler acceptable size fish are being caught; best action is half hour before sunset to half hour after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish are being caught; sorting is needed as numbers of small fish will also be in the catch.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Fair: Yellow perch continue to be harvested from the lake; anglers are very pleased with the quality of the fish caught.

Virgin Lake

Walleye - Good: Good opportunities to catch fish averaging 16 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Fish averaging 8 inches are common.

West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Action has slowed; anglers will catch good numbers of bluegills from the lake.

Foot or ATV traffic at this time. Cooler temperatures are in the forecast for the Iowa Great Lakes. For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Fish backwaters and off channel areas with little to no current. Use caution as ice conditions vary and can change fast. Edges may be soft in some areas. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow below the dam.

Decorah District Streams

Get your [2019 fishing license and trout fee](#) today. Stream clarity is excellent. Watch for midges hatches on sunny days. Trout are actively attaching these as they emerge. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Use larger flies or lures mimicking minnows. Spin fishers using a small jig tipped with a minnow should find nice fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Rainbow Trout spawning is at its peak. Larger fish will move to headwaters to lay eggs. Use a weighted caddis stonefly or mayfly nymph. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Use egg patterns in the calm area next to a fast channel of water at the head of a pool.

Lake Hendricks

No motorized vehicles allowed on the ice. Ice depths are 8-10 inches. Open water zone around the aerator; keep away from this area. Use caution on the ice. Water clarity is improved. **Bluegill** - Slow: Early bite is best. For clear ice and water be set-up quiet and ready early. Use small jigs tipped with waxworm or spike near deeper water drop offs. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Anglers are catching a few small bass.

Lake Meyer

Ice depth is 8 to 9 inches. Check ice depths often, especially near springs. Water clarity is improved. Use caution. The bite remains slow. **Bluegill** - Slow: Early morning bite is best. Use small teardrop shaped jigs tipped with waxworm in brush piles in 12-15 feet of water. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass have been caught while fishing for panfish.

Volga Lake

Ice depths are about 8 inches. Use care getting on ice around the boat ramp. Ice around edges are a bit crusty. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish the brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Find Crappie in 1-12 feet water. Use waxworms with bright colored jigheads in the brush piles and west side of the lake.

Winter weather returns for the weekend with highs in the upper teens and single digit lows. Ice conditions have improved. Three plus inches of snow is forecast. Snow covering ice will slow ice formation. For current fishing information, please call the

Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing bumped up to near 9 feet this week. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until edges and areas of current are safe. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Several reports of bass being caught on pole or tip-ups in backwater lake areas.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville bumped up to 17 feet. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. Ice is not safe to cross at Sny Magill with the warmer temperatures and recent rain. Lower end of Bussey Lake still has unstable ice around edges. **Walleye**- Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Sauger** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level at Guttenberg is up about a foot to 8.7 feet and is expected to slowly fall. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. Good reports on panfish at Bertom lake this week. **Walleye** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Sauger** - Slow: Recent ice flows are making tailwater fishing difficult. It may take a few days for ice to stabilize. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mid-winter bluegill fishing can be variable, but providing good action with decent sized fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes.

Backwater ice should be building again, but new snow cover will insulate and slow the process. A slight bump in river levels has the edges unstable. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until safe conditions return. Protected areas have around 6 inches of ice; use caution around shore and areas with current. Upper Mississippi River levels are expected drop slightly. Some tailwater fishing is still happening until ramps freeze up.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels have bounced around this week, but are 7.9 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10.2 feet at the RR bridge. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Ice flows in the tailwater is making boating difficult at times. **Sauger** - Fair: Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular methods of catching walleye and sauger this winter. **Bluegill** - Good: Some ice fishing is occurring in Pool 12; stay alert about ice conditions. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Few reports of nice crappies mixed in with bluegills. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: A few yellow perch are being seen mixed in with bluegills and crappies.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels have bounced around this week and are 8.6 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Tailwater ice flows have been an issue at times, but presently the tailwater is ice free. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - Good: Most of the week the tailwater was ice free, but ice flows may start again with the expected cold snap. Three way rigs with minnows or a jig and minnow is the most popular methods to catch walleye and sauger.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are are rising and are 7.9 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 11.4 feet at Camanche and 6 feet at LeClaire. Ice flows may resume in the tailwater with the expected cold snap. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. **Sauger** - Good: When anglers can successfully dodge ice flows, the walleye and sauger bite has been good. Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular ways to catch walleye and sauger.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level are on the rise at 8.6 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 34 degrees.

Bellevue and Clinton tailwaters are open to angling, but ice flows have been occurring on a regular basis. Ice fishing is limited; anglers remain cautious about conditions. Snow is covering the ice in most locations and insulating the ice. Water levels are now rising throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Unsafe; still lots of open water some ice back in the bays and around the edges.

Lake Belva Deer

Unsafe; open water and thin ice.

Lake Darling

A good portion of the lake remains open; what ice there is looks more like frozen slush after last weekend's snow.

Lost Grove Lake

Unsafe ice; the bays are frozen over but there is still a lot of open water.

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

Coralville Reservoir

The lake level is at winter pool of 683.4 feet. The lake has lots of open water and is dirty with high winter flows.

Diamond Lake

As of Jan. 17, the lake has lots of open water and some areas of skim ice.

Hannen Lake

As of Jan. 17, the lake was reported as having 1.5 inches of ice.

Kent Park Lake

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

Lake Macbride

As of Jan. 17, the lake has lots of open water and some areas of poor ice.

Otter Creek Lake

There is an area of open water and the rest of the ice is marginal. As of Jan. 17, ice fishing is not recommended.

Pleasant Creek Lake

As of Jan. 17, the lake has lots of open water and some areas of poor ice.

Rodgers Park Lake

As of Jan. 17, the lake had 4-5 inches of ice, with half of that being good ice.

Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

There had been a few ice fishing the backwaters at Pinicon Ridge; ice fishing is not recommended as of Jan. 17.

Almost all bodies of water in the Lake Macbride District are unsafe for ice fishing. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Lake Miami

Mostly open water with some skim ice each morning.

Lake Sugema

Mostly open water with some skim ice in the mornings.

Lake Wapello

Open water areas on most of the lake with skim ice forming overnight.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.15 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Open water conditions on the lake. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

Red Haw Lake

Open water on most of the lake.

There is no safe ice in the Rathbun district. Most lakes are covered with a skim of ice. Colder predicted temperatures should help to start making some ice in southern Iowa. 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

Big Creek Lake

As of Jan. 16, the lake has mostly skimmed over again. No angling is occurring, but conditions should improve with the cold weather this weekend.

Don Williams Lake

Anglers are getting on the ice using caution. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie fishing has been good especially late afternoon and evenings. Fish mid lake near creek channel edges stumps and sunken habitat in 10 to 20 feet of water.

Hickory Grove Lake

Anglers are getting on the lake. Check thickness often. **Bluegill** - Good: Good catches of bluegills with crappies mixed in are coming off the lake.

Central Iowa ice conditions have started to improve, but poor conditions still exist south of Highway 30. Conditions should improve greatly over this weekend. 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)

The trout stocking scheduled for Jan. 19th has been postponed until ice conditions improve or the lake has open water in March.

Lake Anita

No fishing reports from Anita this week.

Prairie Rose Lake

No fishing reports from Prairie Rose this week.

Ice conditions are still poor in the southwest district. Very cold temperatures are forecast for the next 10 days; ice will improve. The Jan. 19th trout stocking at Big Lake in Council Bluffs has been postponed. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

Green Valley has 1.5 inches of ice, but many areas of open water.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have 1.5 inches of ice or less. Some lakes still have areas of open water. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.