



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 24.](#)

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.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

On Jan. 24th there was 7 inches of ice near the boat ramp.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

The Bacon Creek trout stocking that was rescheduled for this Saturday, Jan. 26 has been postponed again due to unsafe frigid temperatures and wind chills expected this weekend. Frigid temperatures can also cause issues for the fish in the hatchery truck (e.g, tanks build ice and oxygen lines can freeze). An update will be posted on the [DNR website](#) when a reschedule date is set.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

On Jan. 24th there was 8 inches of ice off the boat ramp of Ice House Point. Be aware of thin ice or open water near Ice House Point, Denison Beach area, and in the east basin near the outlet. Conditions are improving, but they are still extremely 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. 24th there was 6 inches of ice near the boat ramp. Ice is variable; check thickness often when venturing out.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Anglers are fishing near the north boat ramp and in the northeast arm of the lake. All other ice is variable. Look out for open water and thin ice near the beach and in the main lake. Be cautious of thin areas that recently froze over. Ice conditions are improving; check ice thickness often. Float coats and ice picks are always good safety items. Bluegill - Fair: Anglers have picked up some bluegill in the northeast arm of the lake using waxworms fished on a small jig.

[Moorland Pond](#)

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

[North Twin Lake](#)

Anglers have been out, but ice thickness is variable. Look out for thin ice in areas that have recently frozen over. Reports of open water along the southeast shore and mid-lake by Featherstone Park a week ago. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers have picked up some crappie in the southwest part of the lake.

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

Ice conditions on Storm Lake are improving, but are still variable; use extreme caution. Avoid ice along pressure seams, near the big island and any other off-colored ice in areas that were recently open water and are now covered with thin ice. Some areas of the lake have up to 10-15 inches of ice and have seen lots of fishing activity. Ice conditions can change fast; use caution 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 ice thickness varies greatly across lakes and ponds. . Some areas that were open water a week ago have just recently frozen over with thin ice. Use caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Yellow Bass - Fair: Angling for yellow bass is sporadic. Use small jigging spoons with insect larvae. You have to keep moving to stay on fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are

catching a few nice sized crappie fishing near aquatic plant beds and in the deeper dredge cuts on the west end of the lake. **Walleye** – Fair: Anglers are picking up a few walleye at sunset. The minimum size limit on Clear Lake is 14 inches.

Crystal Lake

Black Crappie - Slow: Anglers are getting a few crappie after sunset.

Rice Lake

Bluegill - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with insect larvae. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Try small jigging spoons or small minnows. Angling success has been slow, but there are good numbers of yellow perch in Rice Lake.

Ice conditions have improved in the Clear Lake District. Some ice has recently formed in the last week; check ice conditions as you go. 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

Bluegill - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish are being caught; sorting is needed with small fish mixed in the catch. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Anglers are catching large yellow bass from the basin in 18 feet of water. Move often to stay on the school of active fish.

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)

Open water and thin ice conditions 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 continue to be caught from the basin in 18 - 20 feet of water; 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; persistent anglers will catch good numbers of bluegills from the lake. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Anglers report catching fish in 18 feet of water in Smiths Bay.

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. Anglers catching a mixed bag of fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow or spike jigging aggressively.

Decorah District Streams

Parking lots in wildlife management areas will not be plowed. Use care when parking along a roadside. A good quality trout stream will not freeze in the winter. **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: Trout are actively attacking emerging midges on warm sunny afternoons.

Lake Hendricks

No motorized vehicles allowed on the ice. Ice depths are 8-10 inches with about 6-8 inches of snow. Open water zone around the aerator; keep away from this area. **Bluegill**- Fair: Early bite is best. Use small jigs tipped with waxworm or spike near deeper water drop offs. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Crappies 10-11 inches have been caught. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Anglers are catching a few small bass.

Lake Meyer

The bite is slow with storm fronts moving in. Ice depth is 8 to 9 inches. Ice depth is 10 inches under 14 inches of snow. Few anglers have been out. **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 10 inches with 2-3 inches of snow. Blowing snow will cause drifting. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish the brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find Crappie in 1-12 feet water. Use waxworms with bright colored jigheads in the brush piles and drop off around the jetty on west side of lake.

Winter weather returns for the weekend with single digits highs and lows below zero. Watch for blowing and drifting snow. Fourteen inches of snow fell last week in the Decorah area. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Casey Lake \(aka Hickory Hills Lake\)](#)

Anglers are doing well on bluegill and some occasional crappie on Casey Lake. Some sorting of bluegill, but some good ones as well. **Bluegill** - Good: Find structure near the east end of lake fishing jigs tipped with a waxworm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Fish ice jigs with a waxworm or a dead stick rig with a live crappie minnow.

There are very few reports this week as ice anglers are getting out now with better ice conditions. Interior rivers are iced over and will remain with the arctic weather conditions upon us. Trout streams are 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 at Lansing has fallen to 8.1 feet this week. Colder weather is starting to build ice again, but it may take time until edges and areas of current are safe. Try fishing in Shore Slough and Blackhawk Park area. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northern pikes 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. **Black Crappie** - Good: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows toward early afternoon.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

River level at Lynxville has fallen to 16 feet. The ramp is now frozen over at the dam. Anglers have been crossing at Sny Magill with about 6 inches ice on Johnson Slough. Stay on the path as ice is weaker closer to the ramp. **Northern Pike** - Good: Some northern pikes 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. **Black Crappie** - Good: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows toward early afternoon.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level at Guttenberg has fallen to 6.9 feet. Ramps are frozen over at the dam. Ice is building this week. Good reports on panfish at Bertom Lake-Wisconsin side and Zollicoffers at Mud Lake near Dubuque. **Northern Pike** - Good: 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** - Good: A few perch are being caught through the ice in deeper cuts in backwater lakes. **Black Crappie** - Good: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows toward early afternoon.

Ice anglers will see an improvement in ice conditions this week with the subzero temperatures. Most areas have 10 inches plus; use caution in areas of current and edges which have thin spots. Heavy snow cover will insulate the ice preventing some areas from freezing solid.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are stable this week at 6.8 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.9 feet at the RR bridge. This is down over a foot from last week. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. The tailwater will be locked in again with ice. **Sauger** - No Report: Jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows are the most popular ways to catch walleye and sauger this winter. **Bluegill** - Good: Some ice fishing is occurring in Pool 12; stay alert about ice conditions. Bluegill fishing has been good at times. **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 7.8 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Tailwater ice flows have been an issue; the tailwater is expected to freeze in with the next cold snap. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - No Report: Ice flows are occurring again and the tailwaters are expected to freeze later this week. Three way rigs with minnows or a jig and minnow is the most popular ways to catch walleye and sauger this winter. **White Bass** - Fair: Small white bass are reported at Sabula Lakes, but ice conditions have been marginal.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are somewhat stable at 5.5 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 5 feet at LeClaire. This is down over a foot from last week. The tailwater is expected to freeze in with the expected cold snap. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: 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

The water level is receding at Rock Island at 9 feet. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 35 degrees. No fishing has been reported to us in Pool 15.

Bellevue and Clinton tailwaters have been open to fishing, but will most likely freeze in during the next cold snap. Ice fishing conditions have improved, but remain cautious about conditions. Snow is covering the ice in most locations and insulating ice. Water levels are now stable to falling throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport has risen to 9.22 feet. Tailwater stage has risen close to 2 feet since Monday. The Marquette Street boat ramp is snow covered and iced in. Unsafe ice conditions with the rising river levels and snow cover.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 6.37 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been rising the past few days. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since Monday. River level at Muscatine is 8.79 feet and has been rising. The boat ramp in Muscatine is iced in. Unsafe ice conditions with the rising river levels and snow cover.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 7.78 feet at Lock and Dam 17 and is rising. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since Monday. River stage at Keithsburg is 10.14 feet and has risen close to 2 feet since Monday. Unsafe ice conditions with the rising river levels and snow cover.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 4.15 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been rising the past few days. River stage at Burlington is 10.25 feet and has been rising. Unsafe ice conditions.

River stages have been rising since earlier this week. Boat ramps and the main channel is starting to freeze 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

Unsafe ice; continued cold weather for several more days might improve conditions.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Finally making ice; needs a few more days of cold weather to reach 4 inches of decent ice.

[Lake Darling](#)

The main part of the lake finally froze over Tuesday night. Needs more time and cold to make the ice thick enough to walk out on.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Earlier this week there was about 3 inches of ice on the lake with some thinner areas; stay off the ice for a few more days.

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 just recently frozen over; ice conditions are extremely variable as there is still higher than normal flows for this time of year.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The lake has frozen over, but ice is variable at 2-4 inches. Use caution if venturing out. The ice fishing derby for this weekend has been cancelled.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake just refroze on Jan. 19th; ice conditions are variable. As of Jan. 24th, much of the lake has 4-5 inches of ice; areas over deeper water may have less, while shallower protected areas may have more.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

Ice anglers have been out; exact ice conditions are not known. Use caution as there was areas of open water last week.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake had open water on Jan. 18th, but has now frozen. Ice conditions are variable; use caution if venturing out.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

The backwaters at Pinicon Ridge are reported as having 6-7 inches of "not good" ice.

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

Lake Miami

The lake has recently froze over; ice conditions are variable.

Lake Sugema

The lake has recently froze over; use caution. There are still areas covered with snow and a thin layer of ice.

Lake Wapello

The lake has recently froze over; ice conditions are variable.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.15 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. The lake recently froze over; variable ice thickness. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

Red Haw Lake

The lake recently froze over; ice thickness varies. Check ice thickness often if venturing out.

Ice conditions in the Rathbun district are variable across the district; use caution if venturing out. 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

Conditions are improving; anglers will start to venture back out. Use caution as there will be thinner spots under the snow where there was open water a little over a week ago. Foot traffic only; ATVs are not recommended yet.

Don Williams Lake

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

Bluegill - Good: Conditions are ready for anglers. Good catches of bluegills with crappies mixed in are coming off the lake.

Lake Petocka

Due to poor road conditions and severe cold, the hatchery has not been able to haul trout. We will try to stock trout here sometime next week.

Central Iowa is gaining ice; use caution south of Highway 30 as snow has slowed ice formation. There is generally 4 to 6 inches and conditions continue to improve. 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

All angling activity is taking place in the north arm of the lake. Ice is 6 inches; use caution if you venture west towards the beach. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers report catching bluegill in 6 feet of water in the upper end of the pontoon arm. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappies are being caught close to the creek channel. Early morning and late afternoon is the best bite.

Littlefield Lake

Anglers are starting to venture out on Littlefield from the south side of the lake. Ice is not safe everywhere on the lake; use extreme caution. **Bluegill** - Good: Fishing is good for bluegill if you can get to a cedar tree pile. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few large black crappie are being caught in the afternoon around cedar tree piles.

Prairie Rose Lake

Anglers report 5 to 6 inches of ice on a small portion of the lake. Use extreme caution when moving around. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegills up to 10 inches are being reported east of the beach on the north side of the lake. Find a brush pile to fish around. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 10 inch crappie are being caught around the tree piles.

Ice conditions have improved; use extreme caution as ice is not safe everywhere on lakes and ponds. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Badger Creek Lake

Only about 3 inches of ice. Limited ice fishing activity observed.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions from 1-4 inches of ice. Snow covering the ice is slowing ice formation. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.