



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of February 21](#)

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](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

There is around 12 inches of ice near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm fished in 10-15 feet of water near submerged structure on the east side.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

The DNR stocked rainbow trout at Bacon Creek Lake on Feb. 16th.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The winter aeration system in Town Bay is in operation; beware of open water and thin ice in Town Bay. There is around 16 inches of ice off the boat ramp of Ice House Point. Be aware of thin ice or open water near Ice House Point, along the Denison Beach area, and in the east basin near the outlet. Check ice thickness often. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm in the rock pile out front of Gunshot Hill and off of Cottonwood Point. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm near the

Ice House Point boat ramp. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Try minnows near the bottom on the rock piles near Gunshot Hill and Cottonwood Point.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

There is around 11 inches of ice near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use waxworms fished near the bottom.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Anglers are fishing mostly near the north boat ramp, in the northeast arm of the lake, and near the southeast boat ramp near the big island. Ice conditions are improving; check ice thickness often. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms fished on a small jig in the northeast arm of the lake. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Use a minnow and spoon in about 20-30 feet of water near submerged structure. Try also waxworms and spikes on a small jig. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Anglers are picking up a few yellow perch while fishing for crappie.

[Moorland Pond](#)

The DNR stocked rainbow trout on Feb 9.

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

Most areas of the lake have 16-18 inches of ice. Avoid ice along pressure seams and near the big island. There is 6-8 inches of snow on the ice in most areas. Check ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons in the dredge cuts on the east side of the lake in about 10-14 feet of water. Low light conditions are best. **White Bass** - Fair: Anglers are picking up some white bass in the east end of the lake and deeper dredged areas while fishing for walleye.

Most ice in the Black Hawk district is 10 to 18 inches with about 6-8 inches of snow. Geese are still keeping areas open on some lakes. Check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Beeds Lake](#)

Due to the excessive snowfall, the Beeds Lake campground road will be closed until snow melt.

[Clear Lake](#)

The ice has several inches of snow on it. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow with a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm near the Baptist camp. 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** - Slow: Use jigging spoons tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** - Slow: Dead stick a minnow early morning or evening near the island.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 18 to 20 inches.

[Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

Ice thickness is 18 to 20 inches.

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

Yellow Bass - Fair: Anglers are catching large yellow bass from the basin. Move often to stay on the school of active fish. **Bluegill** - Good: Numbers of fish are being caught from the south end of the lake; sorting is needed.

Five Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Some activity reported on the lake; you need to search to find active fish. **Walleye** - Fair: Report of fish being caught during the evening hours with traditional baits.

Lake Pahoja

Bluegill - Good: 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 Bass - Fair: Yellow bass activity has slowed, but persistent anglers can catch good numbers of fish. **Black Crappie** - Good: Yellow bass anglers report crappie mixed in the catch.

Minnewashta Lake

Black Crappie - Good: Anglers report catching good numbers of angler acceptable size fish and larger fish early and late day.

Spirit Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Good numbers of angler acceptable size fish continue to be caught from the basin in 18 - 20 feet of water; the bite improves through the day. Sorting is needed with numbers of small fish also in the catch.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: 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; best action is half hour before sunset to half hour after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Fish averaging 8 inches are common.

West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Persistent anglers will catch good numbers of large bluegills from the lake. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Anglers report catching fish from Smiths Bay in 18 - 24 feet of water; move often to catch numbers.

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

NORTHEAST

Decorah District Streams

Ice and packed snow on roads make travel slow. Road shoulders are hard to see. Use care traveling the back country. Think spring. The [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) is now available. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Melt water cooled and muddied streams. Find springs and fish this area; water will be warmer. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Fish areas trout are seeking food and protection. Move a fly along a current break. **Brook Trout** - Fair: If you match the right insect hatch switch pattern.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

About a foot of snow on 12 inches of ice. Open water around the aerator; use caution in this area. No motorized vehicles allowed here. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Ice depth is 10 inches under 8-12 inches of snow. Rain and snow melt will muddy the water. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow.

[Volga Lake](#)

Freeze and thaw cycles are causing variable ice conditions around edges. Use caution getting on the ice. Snow melt and rain will muddy the water. Few anglers have been out. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a spike or waxworm. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Continued cold and active weather patterns are slowing angling activities. Weekend forecast again calls for melting snow and rain that will make the water muddy. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Alice Wyth Lake](#)

Reports of anglers catching bluegill and crappie. Some sorting may be needed. **Bluegill**-Fair: Try fishing a jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a jig tipped with a waxworm or crappie minnow. Look for suspended fish or near the bottom.

[Silver Lake \(Delaware\)](#)

Anglers are catching some bluegill and northern pike. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try fishing a jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Anglers have had success using tip-up rigs with a live shiner for bait.

The wintry weather continues; the upcoming weekend forecast looks wet and cold. 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 is 8.1 feet at Lansing. Avoid ice on shoreline edges and areas of current. Fish

deep cuts above the Lansing bridge or in Shore Slough. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cuts. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

River level is 16 feet at Lynxville and is stable. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice. Rains over the weekend may cause unsafe ice in areas of current and shorelines. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cuts.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level is 7.7 feet at Guttenberg. Ramps are frozen over at the dam. The bite is slow, but some nice perch are biting in Zollicoffer at Mud Lake near Dubuque. Avoid the creek area walking in as ice may be thin. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cut..

Upper Mississippi River levels are stable. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice. Ice depths are 10-14 inches. Ice may deteriorate with rain expected over the weekend.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are 7.3 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.7 feet at the RR bridge. This is down from last week and is expected to remain stable. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 33 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Use small jigs with waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being caught on waxworms. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch are being caught mixed in with bluegills and crappies.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels are 8.9 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. The tailwater is iced in. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a three way rig with minnows or a jig and minnow. **White Bass** - Fair: Small white bass are reported

at Sabula and Browns lakes. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Yellow perch fishing is expected to pick up yet this winter

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are 6.9 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 10.2 feet at Camanche and 5.2 feet at LeClaire. Expect levels to recede. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows. Poor weather conditions have limited fishing activity. **Bluegill** - No Report: Decent ice is reported in places.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is 11.1 feet and is expected to drop. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. No fishing has been reported to us in Pool 15.

The tailwaters are iced in at the ramps. Ice fishing conditions are variable, but decent ice can be found in places. Even with the extreme cold temperatures, some thin ice is still reported in some backwaters. Water levels are dropping throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.30 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport and is falling. Tailwater stage has fallen 2 feet since last week. The Marquette St. ramp in Davenport is open, but the docks at the landing are closed due to being covered in snow and ice. As of Feb. 21, the main channel is open, but Sylvan Slough above the railroad bridge is still frozen in. Conditions may change. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 7.31 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. Tailwater stage has fallen 2 feet since last week. The boat ramps in Muscatine are still frozen in. The high and fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions. The Big Timber ramp is open and the parking lot has been bladed. We have not received any ice fishing or ice conditions reports for Big Timber. Use caution if venturing out on the ice and check ice thickness often as you move.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.22 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The Toolsboro ramp is closed. The high and fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.36 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is falling. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The high and fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

River stages have been falling the past few days. With the high and fluctuating river levels, there could be 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

Ice is in pretty good shape; the edges might degrade this weekend with the warm weather. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappie fishing remains a bit spotty; move around until you find fish.

Lake Belva Deer

Ice conditions remain good with about 9-10 inches. Early morning bite is best. **Bluegill** – Fair: Look for bluegill along the creek channel in the flooded trees in 16 to 20 feet of water near the bottom.

Lake Darling

Still about 12 inches of ice. Some of the top layers are degraded from last week's freezing rain, but the majority of the ice is still good. **Black Crappie** - Good: The bite shifted from bluegills to crappies last week. Look for the crappies in about 2 to 3 feet off the bottom in 12 to 14 feet of water.

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

Diamond Lake

There is 8-12 inches of ice with the same amount of snow on top. **Black Crappie** - Good: Fish the basin or around deeper brush for 8- to 9-inch crappies. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch 7- to 8-inch bluegills with a jig/waxie around brush.

Green Castle Lake

Black Crappie - Slow: Large fish are being caught. **Bluegill** - Good: It's quantity over quality.

Hannen Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Quite a few fish are 11+ inches. **Bluegill** - Good: Many fish are 8+ inches.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

There is over a foot of ice on the lake. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

Kent Park Lake

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

Lake Macbride

Most ice is 8-12 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigs/waxies fished over rock or brush. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish around stumps or trees in 10-20 feet of water. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Use minnows, spoons or jigs/waxies around stumps or off rock breaks in 15-20 feet of water.

Sand Lake

You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Good. **Brook Trout** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Good. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

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

Lake Miami

Anglers are catching some bluegills and crappies. Use caution and check ice thickness often.

Lake Sugema

Ice thickness is 4-7 inches; use caution if venturing out. Most of the ice fishing in this area is occurring on the Tug Forks lakes northwest of Lake Sugema.

Lake Wapello

Very few reports this week as anglers are just starting to get out with the better ice conditions. Use caution and check ice thickness often.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.64 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Ice thickness is variable so use caution. Not many anglers have been out. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

Red Haw Lake

Anglers report 12 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a waxworm. Sorting is needed for larger fish.

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

Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use jigging spoons tipped with waxworms. Trout tend to stay close to the perimeter of the lake; don't setup over water deeper than 15 feet. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Big Creek Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Use live minnows or waxies on glow jigs in the afternoons and evenings. Fish brush piles deeper than 15 feet and the edges of the roadbeds and creek channel mid-lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Try live minnows still fished and minnows or minnow heads on jigging spoons in creek channel edges, humps and roadbeds throughout the lake from the Marina to just south of the west boat ramp.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Black Crappie - Good: Crappie fishing has been good in the 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](#)

The lake is drawn down around 9 feet, but ice fishing is still possible. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch bluegills and crappies off brush piles with wax worms and minnows.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use small jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or still fish live minnows. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Good ice conditions continue in Central Iowa. There is 10 to 15 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.

[Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Big Lake was stocked with 1000 rainbow trout on Feb. 9th. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use small jigs minnows or wax worms. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Cold Springs District Farm Ponds

Ice conditions on ponds have improved; use caution, especially in the southern part of the district. Never fish alone and drill holes often when venturing out. **Bluegill** – Good. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

[Lake Anita](#)

Anglers report good success fishing tree piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers report catching bluegill around brush piles. Fish average 8.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappies are being caught in tree piles close to the creek channel. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

[Littlefield Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. Find fish around cedar tree piles placed in the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Fishing is good for bluegill if you can get to a cedar tree pile. Sorting is needed for larger fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few large black crappie are being caught in the afternoon around cedar tree piles.

[Nodaway Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. Find fish in the brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Look for bluegills in the tree piles. Fish will average 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Late afternoon bite is best. Fish will average 10 inches.

[Orient Lake](#)

Anglers report good panfishing at Orient this week. **Black Crappie** - Good: Find 10- to 12-inch crappies in the tree piles out from the dam. **Bluegill** - Good: Use waxworms in the tree piles. Fish will average 7.5 inches.

Prairie Rose Lake

Anglers report good ice conditions at Prairie Rose. **Bluegill** - Slow: You may need to move around to find fish. Bluegill in Prairie Rose are quality size. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 10 inch crappie are being caught around the tree piles.

Viking Lake

Ice conditions have improved at Viking Lake. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Target brush piles. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

Southwest district ice conditions are good. Most reports are 6 to 10 inches of ice. Geese are still keeping areas open on some lakes. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

About 12 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Catch crappie up to 8.5 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches using jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Lake Icaria

About 8-10 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleye up to 20 inches with minnows fished along the roadbed early and late in the day. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie up to 9.5 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Little River Watershed Lake

About 7-9 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 12 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Three Mile Lake

About 12 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Good: Catch walleye up to 16 inches with minnows fished near the roadbed early and late in the day. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie up to 9 inches using minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

About 12 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Catch crappie up to 9.5 inches using jigs tipped with a minnow or waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions from 6-12 inches. Use caution and drill test holes. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.