



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 26](#)

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](#)

Arrowhead Lake had around 3-4 inches of ice at the boat ramp on Dec. 26. There has been little fishing activity. Use extreme caution.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

On Dec. 23, the DNR stocked about 1500 rainbow trout ranging from 10-12 inches long. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Ice thickness was 5 inches on Dec. 23. Use caution and check ice often if you venture out. Predicted rain over the weekend may further deteriorate ice conditions. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use a piece of worm, small minnow, or power bait bite fished under a bobber. Put the bait on a small hook or small and shiny jig.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

As of Dec. 26, there was 5 inches of ice off the Ice House Point boat ramp. There are still open water fishing opportunities at the Fish House and the Inlet Bridge. There is thinner ice and open areas in the east basin. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching some perch around Shotgun Hill and the Ice House Point boat ramp. Keeper size perch range

from 8- to 12-inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers have picked up some fish using minnows on a small jig.

Black Hawk Pits

There was 3-4 inches of ice at the Black Hawk Pits boat ramp on Dec. 26. Forecast temperatures and rain over the weekend may deteriorate ice conditions. **Black Crappie**-Fair: Anglers have picked up some perch on minnows.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Reports of variable ice thickness on Storm Lake from 2-8 inches. Foot traffic only is recommended. Use extreme caution; may be some open areas and seams. Predicted rain over the weekend may further deteriorate ice conditions. Anglers have reported catching perch, walleye, and some crappie.

Lakes in West Central Iowa have lost 1-2 inches of ice since last week. As of Dec. 26th, ice thickness ranges from 2-8 inches on area lakes. Geese have kept several areas open on some lakes. Foot traffic only is recommended in our district at this time. Use extreme caution; predicted temperatures and rain over the weekend may further deteriorate ice conditions. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Beeds Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 5 inches.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 9 inches. Use caution near the rushes. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm near the edge of vegetation. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch are biting on a variety of baits. You may have to change your technique to catch larger fish. **Walleye** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow head. **Black Crappie** – Slow.

Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 5 to 6 inches. No fishing activity reported.

Lake Smith

Ice thickness is 5 to 7 inches. Anglers are catching small bluegills and a few crappies. Use caution near the aeration hole southeast of the island.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** – Slow.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 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

Ice thickness is 5 to 7 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Sorting is needed, but the bite has been

good in the southern section of the lake along the weed line. Use small jigs and wigglers near the trestle and the Hattie Elston Boat Ramp. **Walleye** - Good: Fishing near Parks Marina in the evening has been good. Use spoons, jigging raps, or minnows in early morning or evening. **Yellow Bass** – Fair.

Ingham Lake

The aeration system has been started. Use caution in the southeast side of the lake. Signs are up around the aerator hole.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Perch – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The aeration system has been started. Use caution on the east side of the lake. Signs are up around the aeration holes.

Spirit Lake

Ice thickness is 7-10 inches. **Walleye** - Good: Fish 1 hour before and after sunrise or sunset. Use spoons or jigging raps tipped with minnow heads in 12-14 feet of water. Also try live minnows. Reports of lots of slot size and bigger fish. **Bluegill** - Good: Use wigglers and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Trickles Slough. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try minnows and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Minniwaukon. Best bite is early and late. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Fair: Size quality is outstanding with some sorting. Use jigs and minnows or wigglers in the main lake.

West Okoboji Lake

West Okoboji ice conditions are variable. Use extreme caution when heading out and check ice thickness and conditions regularly. Ice thickness has been up to 5 inches in small bays and thinner on the main lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Little Emerson Bay has been producing a few nice bluegills; sorting is needed. **Walleye** - Fair: Fish rocky areas in 18-20 feet of water. Live minnows work best an hour before and after sunset. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: A unique early season bite has been reported in Little Emerson Bay.

Ice thickness is 4-10 inches on area lakes. Warmer weather has slowed ice formation, but the quality is generally good. Some large seams and ridges have become evident; atay away from these areas. Use caution with ATV's. No vehicle traffic is advised. Water flow into and out of the area lakes has caused weak areas around bridges and other constrictions. Aeration systems at Center Lake, Silver Lake (near Lake Park), and Ingham Lake have been started and signs are put up. Stay clear of these systems. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Backwaters and slack water areas are frozen. Use care when crossing areas with current. Check depths often. Anglers are finding fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find deeper

water or off-channel refuges out of current. Use waxworms or spikes. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Anglers are finding a few perch mixed in with the crappie.

Decorah District Streams

Stocked fish remain in streams through the winter creating excellent angling opportunities. Trout streams with good flows stay open even during winter. Check our [2020 Winter Community Trout Stocking Schedule](#) to find out when trout may be coming to a community near you. Wear bright orange and be visible to hunters when fishing wildlife management areas. **Brown Trout** - Good: Try a fly imitating small silvery fish. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. **Rainbow Trout**- Good: Use an ultra-light pole and reel for fun action. Try a spinner in eddies and around structure. **Brook Trout** - Good: With fewer insect hatches, try using flies imitating minnows such as a wholly bugger.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Lake Hendricks has about 5 inches of ice with water sitting on top. Water has a brown tint to it. Open water around the aerator. **Not safe for ice fishing.** Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm. Fish are suspended off the bottom. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a baited hook; gills are sitting closer to the bottom.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Lake Meyer has about 5 inches of ice. Hit or miss action on panfish, but no limits yet. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm around brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are suspended above brush piles. Baited hooks work best.

[Turkey River \(above Clermont\)](#)

Backwaters and slack water areas are ice covered. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on Vernon Springs impoundment when covered with ice. Water is crystal clear. Check ice depths often, especially where there is current.

[Volga Lake](#)

Volga Lake has about 6 inches of ice. Use care when going on ice; check depths often. Warmer temperatures are melting surface ice, causing extra slippery conditions. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use waxworms or spikes fished in brush or rock piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small bait on small hooks. Gills are small.

Great weather continues through the week to go ice fishing. Low 40's for highs to low 20's for lows. Ice conditions can change quickly with warmer daytime temperatures. Many rivers have areas of open water. Use care when around areas with current. Most area lakes have about 5 inches of ice. Trout streams are good to excellent. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

No reports on the Cedar River in Black Hawk and Bremer counties this past week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Manchester District Streams

Most streams have great populations of wild brown trout and catchable stocked rainbow trout.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

No reports this past week on the Maquoketa River in Delaware County. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

No reports this past week on the Shell Rock River in Bremer and Butler counties. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

No reports on the Wapsipinicon River in Buchanan County this past week. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve crankbaits or use jig and minnow near instream habitat or deeper overwintering areas.

Anglers are taking back to the interior rivers for walleye fishing. Ice conditions have quickly deteriorated with the recent warm weather; **ice fishing is not recommended**. All 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 is 9.4 feet at Lansing and expected to fluctuate slightly this week. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is 32 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Vertical jigging with twister tails or jig tipped with minnows has had the most success in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fish for perch through the ice in deeper cuts with some vegetation in backwater areas. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Few reports of crappie mixed with bluegills fished through the ice. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill are biting on waxworms fished through the ice in backwater lakes.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level is 618.1 feet at Lynxville and expected to rise slightly before leveling off. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is 34 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fish for perch through the ice in deeper cuts with some vegetation in backwater areas. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Few reports of crappie mixed with bluegills fished through the ice. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill are biting on waxworms fished through the ice in backwater lakes.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level at Guttenberg has risen more than a foot to 10 feet and is expected to level out this week. Ice is just starting to form on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended** until the ice strengthens. Water temperature is 32 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: A lot of smaller fish are being caught. Vertical jigging with twister tails or trolling crankbaits has been successful in Lock and Dams tailwaters. **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs tipped with a minnow in the tailwaters of the Lock & Dams. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fish for perch through the ice in deeper cuts with some vegetation in backwater areas. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Few reports of crappie mixed with bluegills fished through the ice.

Upper Mississippi River levels have risen slightly and are fluctuating this week. Many of the roller gates are now down; this will help stabilize tailwater areas. A lot of new ice is flowing down the channel which will make fishing difficult; some ramps are starting to ice in. Caution is recommend when ice fishing until the ice strengthens. Areas of current do not have safe ice. Water temperature is 32 degrees

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 8 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10.4 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque were expected to rise early week then start to recede. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Tailwater fishing is taking place, but periodic ice flows are occurring. **Backwater ice is marginal for ice fishing within Pool 12.** **Sauger** - Good: Tailwater sauger fishing has most anglers using a jig and minnow. Lots of small sauger and small walleye are being reported. The tailwater may open up with warmer temperatures this weekend. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Backwater ice is marginal. Some crappies are being caught. **Walleye** - Fair: Most anglers are pulling crank baits in the tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch have shown up in the ice fishing creel. **Bluegill** - Slow: Most bluegill fishing has been slow, but some experienced anglers are finding fish. **Ice is marginal.**

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is around 8.5 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water level will rise early week and then recede again. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Tailwater fishing is taking place, but periodic ice flows are occurring. **Backwater ice is marginal for ice fishing.** **Sauger** - Good: Most anglers are using a jig and minnow. **Walleye** - Good: Some walleyes are being reported by anglers pulling double Rapalas or a floating jig head with a minnow. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice thickness is marginal at best for ice fishing.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 7.5 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 11 feet at Camanche and 6 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. River levels were expected to rise early week then recede again. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being taken on double Rapala rigs. **Sauger** - Good: Use a jig tipped with a minnow. Lots of small fish reported.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels are around 8.2 feet at Rock Island and is expected to recede. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Tailwaters are receiving high fishing pressure, but some ice flows are occurring at times. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities has risen close to 2.5 feet since last week to 9.71 feet. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. The Marquette St boat ramp is open. **Unsafe ice conditions. Walleye** - Fair: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Try jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. Mostly small saugers are being caught.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.52 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. River stage is 10.18 feet at Muscatine; flood stage is 16 feet. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow. **Unsafe ice conditions. Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes by the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - Slow: Use jigs and minnows or pull three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.62 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. River stage is 10.29 feet at Keithsburg; flood stage is 14 feet. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.38 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is rising. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 11.47 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is 526.55 feet at Fort Madison; flood stage is 528 feet. The Tama Beach boat ramp is still frozen in and the parking lot is muddy. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Tailwater stages have risen close to 2.5 feet since last Friday. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. There has been some tailwater fishing this past week with the warm temperatures. **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](#)

Open water and slush on the ice that is still there.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice; very thin and melting.

[Lake Darling](#)

Three days of near 60 degree weather has melted ice. The middle of the lake is wide open; most of the ice left has water on top of it and is more like slush.

Lake Darling District

Some of the smaller ponds out in the open are nearly ice free now. Rain forecast for this Saturday should melt more of the ice.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Warm weather is weakening what ice is there. Forecast above freezing temperatures won't build ice.

[Pollmiller Park Lake](#)

Unsafe ice and open water.

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

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The ice is opening back up in the channel area; **the remaining ice is unsafe**. The lake is at winter pool of 683.4 feet.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake is 95% ice covered, but the **ice is unsafe**.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is covered with **unsafe ice**.

Most lakes/ponds now have skim ice; **there is no safe ice in this area**. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

Skim ice is forming overnight when cold enough, making fishing difficult.

[Lake Sugem](#)

Skim ice is forming in some of the bays. Geese are keeping large areas open.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Skim ice is forming at night, making fishing difficult.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South](#)

Trout were stocked on Oct. 25th. The pond is covered in skim ice, making fishing difficult. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.04 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. Docks have been pulled out for the season and most campgrounds are closed. The bays and coves will start to be covered with skim ice, making fishing difficult.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Skim ice is forming overnight, making fishing difficult.

There has been very little angler activity in the last week. There is **no safe ice** in the Rathbun district. The district includes Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Wayne 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](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended until ice conditions improve. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: When ice conditions improve, catch trout 5 to 20 yards off shore using panfish jigs and small jigging spoons tipped with waxworms. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended until ice conditions improve.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended until ice conditions improve. **Black Crappie** - Good: Expect fair to good crappie fishing this winter with many 8.5- to 10-inch fish. Fish suspended fish over the stump covered ridge that extends out from the shoreline across from the boat ramp.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended until ice conditions improve. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: When ice conditions improve, catch trout with panfish jigs and small jigging spoons tipped with waxworms. Start by fishing close to shore in 3 to 5 feet of water. If no activity, keep moving slightly deeper until you find fish. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Ice fishing in Central Iowa is not recommended until conditions improve. 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 \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Unsafe ice. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Lake Anita](#)

Warm temperatures have deteriorated ice conditions at Lake Anita.

Littlefield Lake

Littlefield had 4.5 inches of ice. **Ice fishing is not recommended** with forecast warm temperatures and rain this weekend.

Ice fishing in the southwest Iowa is not recommended. More reports will become available as conditions improve. For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.