



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

## Conservation and Recreation



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 2](#)

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 Jan. 2. Ice has pulled away from shore in some areas. There has been little fishing activity.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

As of Jan. 2, 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 open water and thin ice in the east basin and in the inlet bay. **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 inches of ice, with some open areas and rotten ice right along shore, on Jan. 2. **Ice fishing is not recommended** until conditions improve.

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

Reports of 5-8 inches of ice on the East side, with more variable conditions elsewhere on

the lake and open areas around the big island. Check ice thickness often if you venture out. Use extreme caution, may be some open areas and seams. Anglers report catching perch, walleye, and white bass.

Ice conditions are extremely variable in west central Iowa. Some lakes have open water areas and unsafe ice. Other lakes that are seeing angler activity have 3-8 inches of ice. Use extreme caution; check thickness often and avoid discolored ice. Foot traffic only is recommended in our district at this time. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 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. Use larger baits and change location to find bigger fish. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head near the edge of vegetation. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: You have to move around to find fish.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. No fishing activity reported.

### Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 6 to 7 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Lot of small fish are being caught.

### Lake Smith

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. Anglers are catching small bluegills and a few crappies. Use caution near the aeration hole southeast of the island.

### Lower Pine Lake

Ice thickness is 3 to 4 inches. Poor ice condition along the shore is making access dangerous. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Rice Lake

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

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches.

### Upper Pine Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### East Okoboji Lake

**Walleye** - Fair: Fish the southern basin. Try near Parks Marina. Evening bite is best. **Bluegill** – Fair.

### Lake Pahoja

**Bluegill** – Good.

### Lost Island Lake

**Yellow Bass - Good:** Some anglers are doing well when they find a school of fish. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: A few larger fish are being caught with some sorting.

### Scharnberg Pond

Rainbow Trout, stocked on Oct. 26, are still being caught. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Spirit Lake

Ice thickness is 7-10 inches. Avoid seams and points. **Walleye** - Good: Evening and morning bite is best. Use live minnows and jigging baits. **Bluegill** - Fair: Evening hours are best. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Best bite is early and late. Recent unsettled weather slowed the bite slightly, but it should pick back up.

### Trumbull Lake

**Yellow Perch** - Slow: A few fish are being caught.

### West Okoboji Lake

Use extreme caution on the main lake. Smaller bays have 5-6 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: **Walleye** - Fair: Evening hours are best.

Ice thickness is 5-10 inches on area lakes. Warmer weather has slowed ice formation, but the quality is generally good after recent rains. Some large seams and ridges have become evident; stay away from these areas. Use caution with ATV's. No vehicle traffic is advised. Avoid inlets and bridges. 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, but may lose ice quickly depending on weather. 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 4 inches of ice with water sitting on top. Ice is turning dark. Water has a brown tint to it. Open water around the aerator; be careful around this area. 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 6-8 inches of ice. Water is sitting on top of the ice. Ice is turning dark. Use care when going on ice; check depths often. Hit or miss action on panfish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm around brush piles. **Black Crappie** - Fair: 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

Ice on Volga Lake is melted around the edges. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** 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.

Rain last weekend caused many rivers and streams to rise and get muddy. Trout streams cleared. High water levels and increased flows can cause ice conditions to deteriorate very quickly. Area lakes have about 3-5 inches of ice. Use care when around areas with current. Winter returns with temperatures in the low 30's for highs to low 20's for lows. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

### Mississippi River Pool 9

River level is 9.1 feet at Lansing and is expected to fluctuate slightly this week. Ice is variable on backwaters due to warm weather and snow cover. 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 617.7 feet at Lynxville. Ice is variable on backwaters due to warm weather

and snow cover. 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 is 9.4 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to fluctuate this week. **Ice fishing is not recommended** due to warm weather and snow cover. 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: Perch are biting in Sunfish and Mud Lake. Use caution and avoid the creek area at Mud Lake; **ice is not safe**. Fish 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. Use caution if ice fishing due to warmer weather and snow cover making poor ice conditions. Areas of current do not have safe ice. Water temperature is 32 degrees

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#### [Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 9 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 11.2 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to rise. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Limited tailwater angling is happening. **Sauger** - Slow: Tailwater sauger fishing has most anglers using a jig and minnow. Lots of small sauger and small walleye are being reported. Some ice flows are occurring. **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** - No Report: Most ice is in poor condition limiting ice fishing.

#### [Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is 10.3 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water level will rise. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Tailwater fishing is taking place, but periodic ice flows are happening. Backwater ice is nearly non-existent. **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 9.6 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 12.5 feet at Camanche and 7.2 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. River levels are expected to rise. Tailwater fishing is taking place, but no ice fishing is being reported; **ice is unsafe**. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being taken on double Rapala rigs. **Sauger** -

Good: Use a jig tipped with a minnow. A few nice sauger have been reported in the past few weeks.

### [Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water level is around 10.5 feet at Rock Island and is expected to rise. The water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good.

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

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### [Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities has risen close to 1.5 feet since last week to 10.49 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 9.64 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Tailwater stages have risen close to 1.5 feet since last Thursday. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. River stage is 11.49 feet at Muscatine; flood stage is 16 feet. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. **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 11.13 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since last week. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. River stage is 11.45 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 7.84 feet at Lock and Dam 18. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since last week. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 13.07 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is 527.14 feet at Fort Madison; flood stage is 528 feet. We have not received any fishing report information for this pool. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Tailwater stages have risen close to 1.5 feet since last Thursday. 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.

### Lake Belva Deer

Mostly open water.

### Lake Darling

A very warm weekend, hard rains, and strong winds left the lake ice free on Monday

### **Lake Darling District**

Most ponds are completely open; a few more protected one have some ice floating around on them. **Unsafe ice.**

### Lost Grove Lake

Rain wrecked what ice was there. **Unsafe ice.**

### Pollmiller Park Lake

Open water.

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

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### Coralville Reservoir

The bays have some skim ice, but the main lake is ice free. The lake is at normal winter pool of 683.4 feet.

### Lake Macbride

The lake is 90% ice free this week.

Most lakes/ponds are partially to mostly open water this week. Those that have remaining ice, are **not safe for travel.** For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### 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 904.45 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.

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### Lake Anita

Warm temperatures have deteriorated ice conditions at Lake Anita.

### Littlefield Lake

Warm temperatures have deteriorated ice conditions at Littlefield Lake.

### Prairie Rose Lake

Unsafe ice conditions.

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

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