



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



THE SCHEDULE IS OUT - TIME TO CATCH TROUT!

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 9](#)

[January Fishing Podcast](#)

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](#)

Arrowhead Lake had 4 inches of ice at the boat ramp on Jan. 8. There has been little fishing activity.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

The DNR will stock rainbow trout at Bacon Creek Lake at 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 25th. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. 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 Jan. 8, there was 5-6 inches of ice off the Ice House Point boat ramp. This area of the lake has the thickest ice. There are open water fishing opportunities at the Fish House on Ice House Point. There is a large area of open water in the east basin and thin ice in the inlet bay. The winter aeration system in Town Bay will be started Jan 16; avoid

this area as there will be open water and thin ice. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Anglers are catching perch around Gunshot Hill and the Ice House Point boat ramp. Keeper size perch range from 8- to 12-inches. The bite has been good, but sorting is needed. Most anglers are using waxworms. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are picking up 6-9 inch bluegill using waxworms. Most anglers are fishing near the Ice House Point boat ramp and Gunshot Hill.

Black Hawk Pits

There was 3-4 inches of ice near the boat ramp on Jan. 8. **Ice fishing is not recommended** until conditions improve.

Moorland Pond

The DNR will stock rainbow trout in Moorland Pond at 11 a.m. Jan. 18th. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. 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.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Reports of 6-8 inches of ice on the East side, with more variable conditions elsewhere on the lake and open areas around the big island and towards the outlet. Use caution and avoid open areas, seams, and discolored ice. Wear a float coat and have ice picks and rope with you. Anglers report catching perch, walleye, and white bass.

Ice thickness in west central Iowa is 3 to 8 inches. Some lakes have seams and open areas. Use caution, check thickness often, and avoid discolored ice. The winter aeration system in Town Bay of Black Hawk Lake will be started Jan 16; avoid this area as there will be open water and thin ice. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Beeds Lake

There are areas of open water near the boat ramp and the west end of the lake, as well as along shorelines in certain areas. With melting snow, there will be increased water coming in from Spring Creek and that creates a current through the lake which can to create variable ice conditions.

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 4 inches at the boat ramp. There are large areas of open water and some areas of dangerous ice along the shoreline. **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.

Center Lake

Ice thickness is 7.5-8.5 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution on the west side of the lake, north of the boat ramp. Signs have been put up around the aerator hole.

East Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. **Bluegill** - Good: Sorting is needed, but the bite has been good in the southern section of the lake along the weed line. Try near the trestle and the Hattie Elston Boat Ramp. Use small jigs and wigglers. **Walleye** - Fair: Fishing near Parks Marina in the evening has been good. Use spoons, jigging raps, or minnows in the early morning or evening. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Yellow Bass** – Fair.

Ingham Lake

Ice thickness is 7.5-8.5 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution in the southeast side of the lake. Signs have been put up around the aerator hole.

Lost Island Lake

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

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is 9-10 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution on the east side of the lake. Signs have been placed around the aeration holes.

Spirit Lake

Ice thickness is 9-10 inches. Reports that a vehicle caused a hole at the south boat ramp near the spillway; please avoid this area. **Walleye** - Good: Fish 1 hour before and after sunrise or sunset. Use spoons or jigging raps tipped with minnow heads n 12-14 feet of water. Also try live minnows. Reports of lots of slot size and bigger fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use wigglers and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Trickle Slough. **Yellow Perch** -

Good: Use minnows and small jigs in Anglers Bay and near 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 and check ice thickness and conditions regularly. Ice thickness has been up to 7 inches in small bays and thinner on the main lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Little Emerson Bay is 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.

Ice thickness is 7.5-10 inches on area lakes. Warmer weather has slowed ice formation, but the quality is generally good. Some large seams and ridges have become evident; stay 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 have about 4-6 inches of ice. Ice conditions may worsen with warmer temperatures. 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. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find deeper off-channel areas. Spikes or waxworms tipped on a small jig work well. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers fishing below dams are finding walleye. Use jigs tipped with a ringworm minnow or crawler.

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: Midges and small mayflies are hatching on warmer sunny days. Use flies imitating insects hatching.

Lake Hendricks

Lake Hendricks has about 4-8 inches of ice. Fish activity has slowed. Open water around the aerator; be careful around this area. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the

ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm. Fish are suspended off the bottom. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a baited hook; gills are sitting closer to the bottom.

Lake Meyer

Lake Meyer has about 6-8 inches of ice. Use care when going on ice, especially around the dam. Check ice depths often. Hit or miss action on panfish. Fish are hanging in 10-14 feet of water around brush piles. **Bluegill** - Good: Activity has picked up. Find gills around brush piles using a small jig tipped with a waxworm. **Black Crappie** - Slow: 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 conditions are variable on Volga Lake depending on temperatures, but 4-6 inches is common. Use care when going on ice; check depths often. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use waxworms or spikes fished in brush or rock piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small bait on small hooks. Gills are small.

Brief warm-up Thursday with temperatures in the mid-40's dropping through the weekend to the low 20's for highs. Rain and snow possible through the weekend with little accumulation. Open water on most rivers in main channel with backwaters frozen. Use care when around areas with current. Area lakes have about 3-8 inches of ice. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers are catching some walleye in the Cedar River, particularly between the Waverly and Cedar Falls section of the river. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow in deeper overwintering areas. Look for some depth and off-channel current breaks near eddies.

It's been a very unpredictable winter; ice fishing reports are few to none. Use extreme caution if ice fishing on lakes and ponds. Reports of anglers catching some walleye on the Cedar River this past week. 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 at Lansing has risen to 9.8 feet and is expected to remain high 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 at Lynxville has risen to 619.3 feet and is expected to drop slightly. 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 at Guttenberg has risen to 10.9 feet and is expected to remain high 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 are high, but are expected to level off this week. Tailwater areas will be difficult to fish with Lock & Dam gates open and heavy ice flows. 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

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 9.8 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 12 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to recede. The water temperature is 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Major ice flows are occurring in the tailwater. **Sauger** - No Report: Anglers report lots of smaller sauger with a few nice sized fish mixed in. Tailwater ice flows are limiting angling. **Bluegill** - No Report: **Ice fishing is not recommended**.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water level is 11 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water level will recede. The water temperature is 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwaters are under heavy ice flows. **Backwater ice fishing is not recommended**. **Sauger** - No Report: Anglers report lots of smaller sauger with a few nice sized fish mixed in. Tailwater ice flows are now limiting angling. **Bluegill** - No Report: **Ice fishing is not recommended due to thin ice**.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 9.8 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 13 feet at Camanche and 7.5 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. River levels are expected to recede. Tailwaters are receiving heavy ice flows; **backwater ice fishing is not recommended due to thin ice.** **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 10.6 feet at Rock Island and is expected to recede. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Ice flows are occurring in all tailwaters, limiting angling. Water is receding throughout the district. **Backwater ice fishing is not yet recommended due to thin ice.** If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 10.85 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to stay steady the next few days. Forecast may change with predicted rain and snow. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. The Marquette St boat ramp is open. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Use jigs and minnows or troll three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - Slow: 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 9.93 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to reach 10.2 feet by Friday. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. Reports of slow walleye and sauger fishing in the tailwaters. 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 11.26 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to reach 11.6 feet by Saturday. The river forecast may change with predicted rain and snow. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. 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 7.75 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is forecast to stay fairly steady the next few days. Flood stage is 10 feet at Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 12.95 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is 527.02 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 been rising the past few days. Main channel water temperature is around 34 degrees. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow. **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. A little thin ice is back in the protected bays.

Lake Darling

Some ice has formed at the upper ends of the lake; the rest is still wide open. Forecast rains and wind will take out what little ice there is.

Lake Darling District

Ponds out in the open are ice free during most of the afternoons. What ice there is on ponds is very thin. **Unsafe ice.**

Lost Grove Lake

A mix of **unsafe thin ice** and some open water.

Pollmiller Park Lake

Open water.

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

Coralville Reservoir

Most of the lake is covered with skim ice. The lake is at normal winter pool of 683.4 feet.

Lake Macbride

The lake is partially covered with skim ice.

Otter Creek Lake

The lake is covered with poor ice; **unsafe for travel.**

Pleasant Creek Lake

The lake is partially covered with skim or poor ice.

Union Grove Lake

The lake is mostly covered with poor ice.

Most lakes/ponds are partially to mostly covered with skim or poor ice. **Ice fishing is unsafe in the Lake Macbride District.** 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.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.15 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; most lakes are completely open. 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

Large portions of the lake were open water as of Jan. 9.

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.

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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