



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

## Conservation and Recreation



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 16](#)

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](#)

Ice conditions are improving, but angling activity has been low due to unsafe ice. Check ice thickness often if you venture out. Use waxworms and minnows near structure to target the larger bluegill and crappie this lake commonly produces.

### [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 fished under a bobber. Put the bait on a small hook or small and shiny jig.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

There is 6-7 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. Most of the east basin was open last week and has recently frozen over with thin ice. The winter aeration system in Town Bay is in operation; expect open water and thin ice in Town Bay. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching perch around

Gunshot Hill and the Ice House Point boat ramp. Keeper size perch range from 8- to 12-inches. Waxworms and small minnows work well. **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.

### [Moorland Pond](#)

The DNR will stock rainbow trout in Moorland Pond this Saturday, Jan. 18th at 11 a.m. 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 fished under a bobber. Put the bait on a small hook or small and shiny jig.

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

Ice thickness is variable. Reports of 7-10 inches of ice in the northwest area; much of the southeast area of the lake was open and has recently frozen over so expect thin ice on some areas. Use caution and avoid open areas, seams, and discolored ice. Wear a float coat and have ice picks and rope with you. Anglers are catching perch, walleye, white bass and channel catfish.

Ice thickness in west central Iowa is 3 to 10 inches. Some lakes have open seams and thin areas that were open last week and have recently frozen over. Use caution, check thickness often, and avoid discolored ice. There is open water and thin ice in Town Bay of Black Hawk Lake from the aeration system. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. **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. The best bite is during low light periods. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Use a jig tipped with a waxworm on the edge of vegetation. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Try a small spoon tipped with cut bait or several spikes. You have to move around to find fish.

### [Crystal Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. No fishing activity reported.

### [Lake Cornelia](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 8 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Lot of small fish are being caught.

### [Lower Pine Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 inches at the boat ramp. There is still significant open water north and east of the island. No fishing activity reported.

### [Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** – Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm. **Walleye** – Slow.

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

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches.

### Upper Pine Lake

Ice thickness is 4 inches at the boat ramp. No fishing activity reported.

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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### Center Lake

Ice thickness is 9-13 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution on the west side of the lake, north of the boat ramp. Signs are up around the aerator hole.

### East Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is 9 to 12 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 7-13 inches. The aeration system has been started. Use caution in the southeast side of the lake and off of the northern boat ramp. Signs are up around the aerator hole.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 12 inches. **Yellow Perch** – Fair. **Walleye** – Fair.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is 13 inches. 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 13-15 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** - Fair: Use wigglers and small jigs in Anglers Bay and Trickles 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. Beware of heaves at Atwell and Gull Point; don't drive over heaves/seams. Ice thickness has been up to 12 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 7.5-13 inches on area lakes. Ice conditions have improved with recent low temperatures. 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 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. Four to 5 inches of snow fell early in the week with more predicted for the weekend. 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**

Parking areas in wildlife management areas are not plowed. Use care when parking on the roadside. 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. **Brown Trout** - Good: Try a fly imitating small silvery fish. Feathered spinner baits work well when fished through pools. **Rainbow Trout**- Good: Fish are actively hitting the surface early afternoon. 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. Four to 5 inches of snow fell early in the week, with more to come this weekend. 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. A variety of sizes are being caught. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a baited hook; gills are sitting closer to the bottom. Nine to 11 inch fish common.

### Lake Meyer

Lake Meyer has about 6-8 inches of ice. Three to 4 inches of snow fell early in the week, with more to come this weekend. 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** - Fair: Anglers are marking a lot of fish, but few bites. 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. Three to 5 inches of snow fell in the area, with more to come this weekend. Use care when going on ice; check ice 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.

Winter is here. Snow is possible through the weekend with variable amounts. Area lakes have about 3-8 inches of ice. Open water on most rivers in main channel with backwaters frozen. Use care when around areas with current. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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

A few reports of anglers ice fishing on Casey Lake. Best ice conditions on the lake are near the dam area. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find sunken fish structure near the dam. Use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom; electronics are a bonus to find fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find sunken fish structure near the dam. Try an ice jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom or use electronics to find suspended fish, which often are crappie. Also try a dead stick rig tipped with a live minnow.

### [George Wyth Lake](#)

There has been ice fishing activity on the lake. Reports of 4 to 6 inches of good ice cover. Use extreme caution, especially with the snow cover and upcoming winter storm. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find sunken fish structure; use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find sunken fish structure. Try an ice jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom or use electronics to find suspended fish, which often are crappie. Also try a dead stick rig tipped with a live minnow.

### [North Prairie Lake](#)

Anglers are catching a few trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try fishing jigs tipped with a waxworm or vertically jigging shiny spoons.

There are no reports on the interior rivers; they are currently freezing over. Ice conditions should vastly improve over the next week with the freezing cold temperatures. Use extreme caution on lakes and ponds, especially with the snow cover. 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 9.8 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable near this level. Ice is

around 6 inches in protected areas. Predicted cold weather should strengthen ice, but heavy snow could insulate areas; use caution near shorelines and areas with current. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Reports of nice-sized perch from Pool 9 backwaters. **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 17.2 feet at Lynxville and is expected to remain stable near this level. Ice is around 6 inches in protected areas. Predicted cold weather should strengthen ice, but heavy snow could insulate areas; use caution near shorelines and areas with current. **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: Reports of nice-sized perch from Pool 10 backwaters. **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 9.8 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to remain stable near this level. The DNR ramp has iced in and the city ramp may be iced in this weekend. Ice is around 6 inches in protected areas. Predicted cold weather should strengthen ice, but heavy snow could insulate areas; use caution near shorelines and areas with current. **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.

Water levels have fallen and started to stabilize. Gates are back down at the Lock and Dams, but with expected snow and cold weather ramps may become frozen in soon. Protected backwaters areas have around 6 inches of ice, but thickness can vary and **many areas may have unsafe ice**. Predicted cold weather should strengthen ice, but heavy snow could insulate areas of thin ice; use caution near shorelines and areas with current.

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

The water level is 8 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 10.3 feet at the RR bridge. River levels at Dubuque are expected to hold steady. The water temperature is 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. Major ice flows are occurring in the tailwater; the tailwater may lock in tight. **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: Conditions are improving; use caution.

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

Water level is 9 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is predicted to hold steady. The water temperature is 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. The tailwaters are under heavy ice flows and may lock in this week. Backwater ice fishing is improving; use caution. **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 conditions are improving; use caution

### [Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 7.6 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 11.7 feet at Camanche and 6.1 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. River levels are expected to hold steady. Tailwaters are receiving heavy ice flows; **backwater ice conditions are unsafe**. **Walleye** - No Report: Some walleyes are being taken on double Rapala rigs. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a jig tipped with a minnow. A few nice sauger have been reported in the past few weeks. **Bluegill** - No Report: Backwater ice fishing conditions are marginal, but may improve with the expected cold snap; use caution.

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

Water level is around 8.5 feet at Rock Island and is expected to hold steady. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is good.

Ice flows are occurring in all tailwaters, limiting angling. Some anglers were out this past week. Water level is receding throughout the district and should hold steady. Backwater ice fishing conditions are improving; use caution. 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 is 9.44 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 15. The Marquette St boat ramp is frozen in. **Unsafe ice conditions**.

### [Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.52 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 16. As of Jan. 15th, the ramp at Muscatine was free of ice and the dock was still in. Ramp conditions may change with colder temperatures and snow in the forecast. The gates are back in at the Lock and Dam. **Unsafe ice conditions**. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes by the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Sauger** - No Report: Use jigs and minnows or pull three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits in the tailwaters.

### [Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.85 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. Flood stage is 15 feet at Lock and Dam 17. The gates are out of the water at the Lock and Dam. We have not received any tailwater fishing report information this week. **Unsafe ice conditions**.

### [Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.88 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is falling. Flood stage is 10 feet at

Lock and Dam 18. River stage is 12.14 feet at Burlington; flood stage is 15 feet. River stage is 526.73 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 falling 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](#)

Was completely ice free on Jan. 14; some ice is forming around the edges and in the quiet areas.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Was nearly ice free earlier in the week. Still large areas of open water.

### [Lake Darling](#)

This morning, Jan. 16, there was still large areas of open water from one end of the lake to the other.

### **Lake Darling District Farm Ponds**

Most ponds have frozen back over this week, but are still too thin to walk on. **Unsafe ice.**

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

Just getting back to freezing over. **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](#)

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 mostly covered with skim ice; **unsafe ice.**

### [Otter Creek Lake](#)

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

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is partially covered in skim ice; **unsafe ice.**

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

The lake is mostly covered with poor ice.



Most lakes/ponds are mostly to completely covered with skim or poor ice. **Ice fishing is unsafe in the Lake Macbride District.** Upcoming snow may hide or insulate ice, making ice conditions hard to see and slow to improve. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### Lake Miami

Skim ice has formed recently; the ice is not thick enough to support anglers.

### Lake Sugem

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

### Lake Wapello

Ice has recently formed; the ice is not thick enough to support anglers.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.24 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 have started to ice up, but it is not thick enough to support anglers. The main lake area is still open water.

### Red Haw Lake

Ice has started to form with the recent cold weather, but it is not thick enough to support anglers.

There is **no safe ice** in the Rathbun district; most lakes have skimmed over recently. 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

**Rainbow Trout** - Fair: 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

There was a small area of open water mid-lake as of Jan. 16. The large area that was open last week is averaging 3 inches. Ice in the coves and the north end averaged 8 inches.

### Don Williams Lake

**Black Crappie** - Good: Catch 8.5 to 10 inch crappies using glow jigs with waxworms or minnows. The better bite has been after sunset. Fish suspended fish over the stump covered ridge that extends out from the shoreline across from the boat ramp.

### [Hickory Grove Lake](#)

Hickory Grove was pumped dry in the fall to renovate the fishery. No fishing is available until after the lake is restocked.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

The next stocking is scheduled for Jan. 25; dependent on safe ice conditions. You need a valid fishing license (age 16 and older) and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use 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.

Ice fishing conditions in Central Iowa continue to improve. Use caution; some larger bodies of water had thin ice and open water as of Jan. 12. 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](#)

Lake Anita is holding a large number of geese, keeping the north arm of the lake unsafe or open. There was 4 inches of ice in the upper end of the pontoon arm on Jan. 15th. **Bluegill** - Fair: A couple anglers caught fish directly south of the fish cleaning station.

### [Littlefield Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions on Jan. 15th.** Anglers should be able to fish Littlefield by next week.

### [Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose is holding a large number of geese keeping ice condition unsafe around the beach area. Conditions should improve; use caution if venturing out.

Ice conditions are improving in the southwest district. Use extreme caution; most district lakes had thin ice or open water in the middle of last week. For more information call the SW District Office at 712-769-2587.

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