



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 3](#)

Stay safe when fishing with these tips:

- Try a new fishing spot — if your regular fishing location is popular and busy, try out a new one that is not so crowded.
- Once you find your spot, keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other groups.
- Stick with your immediate family, but keep groups to fewer than 10 people.
- Bring lures from home instead of buying bait to minimize your interaction with other people.
- Bring hand sanitizer and wash your hands often.

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This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each district, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

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](#)
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## **NORTHWEST**

### **Black Hawk Lake**

The lake has skim ice. Open water fishing opportunities are available at the fish house in Town Bay and at the inlet bridge. Target perch, crappie, and bluegill.

### [North Raccoon River \(above State Highway 175 bridge near Auburn\)](#)

Most areas remain free of ice on rivers. River levels are low; fish are concentrated in deeper holes. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Target catfish in the deeper areas with cut bait, liver or stinkbait fished on the bottom. **Walleye** - Fair: Water clarity is good. Look for walleye in deeper areas; use crawlers, twisters or crankbaits.

Most lakes in the district had skim ice last week; fishing activity has been minimal. All ice is unsafe; do not walk on it. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [Blue Pit](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout are biting on a variety of baits. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

### [Clear Lake](#)

Most of the lake froze over this week. Ice is not thick enough for fishing. **Walleye** - Slow: Try fishing the open water areas near the jetty.

### [Lower Pine Lake](#)

Courtesy docks have been pulled for the season.

### [Upper Pine Lake](#)

Courtesy docks have been pulled for the season.

Most areas lakes and rivers iced over this week. Ice is not thick enough for fishing. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### [East Okoboji Lake](#)

The walleye season is open. The water temperature is 37 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find schools in deeper water. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. **Yellow Bass** - Fair.

### [Lake Pahoja](#)

**Bluegill** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try small jigs tipped with waxworms. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Use rubber worms or other slow-moving jigs.

### [Lost Island Lake](#)

**Yellow Perch** – Fair: Anglers are catching 9- to 10-inch perch in 10 feet of water. **Walleye** – Fair.

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

**Walleye** – Fair.

### [Spirit Lake](#)

The walleye season is open; the bite should pick up as water temperatures continue to fall. The water temperature is 36 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Good: Schools are starting to move out to deeper water

around structure. **Walleye** - Fair: Try bottom bouncers or crankbaits to cover more water. **Yellow Perch** - Good: The bite has really picked up; fish are starting to be found closer to shore from accessible areas such as docks. Other areas to try are small humps in the main basin or weed edges.

### West Okoboji Lake

The walleye season is open. The water temperature is 37 degrees. All hoists and docks have been pulled out for the season. **Bluegill** - Fair: Schools are deeper off shore. Try fishing in 20-30 feet of water off most points. Anglers have had success using pilkies. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Find smallmouth bass on rock piles or on the points. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Find largemouth bass on the weed lines. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Schools have started to move deeper off shore. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Easily find yellow bass while fishing for bluegill.

Iowa Great Lake water temperatures are around 37 degrees or lower with many areas starting to ice over. Walking out on the ice is not recommended; ice is not thick enough to hold a person. After this week, air temperatures are expected to be in the upper 30's to mid-40's. All area hoists and docks have been pulled from the lakes to prepare for ice-up. The area bite has been slow lately. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## NORTHEAST

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Water levels remain low. Impoundments are iced over. Anglers are finding fish in open water below dams. **Walleye** - Good: Cooler temperatures are bringing on the bite. Fish moved into deeper holes. Be prepared to run your lure near the bottom of pools. Use live bait for best luck. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use a minnow on a hook under a bobber in the back eddies and deeper pools with little current.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Iowa's trout season remains open all year. Trout streams generally don't freeze over even on really cold days. Many streams maintain excellent populations of brown trout and stocked catchable-size rainbow trout. Many trout streams flow through wildlife management areas. With Iowa's first shotgun season upon us, wear plenty of orange. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use hair jigs, spinnerbaits or small shallow water crankbaits for aggressive fish. Plenty of fish remain in streams over winter. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Avoid stepping on trout nests or redds; these are freshly cleaned areas on stream bottoms. Brownies may be slow to take bait. A keen eye and a fly box filled with a variety of sizes and colors will help match a hatch. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Walk around cleared areas in the stream bottom; these are trout nests or redds. Use small flies imitating midges, minnows or mayflies. Please respect private property open to angling; pick up trash and be considerate.

### Lake Hendricks

The lake is starting to freeze over. Do not walk on ice. The aerator is on; stay away from this area. Few anglers are out. Slow presentation down as water cools.

### Lake Meyer

The lake is completely iced over with about an inch of ice. Do not walk on ice. Water clarity is excellent.

### Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

The river is freezing over in areas with little current. **Find fish in open water below dams. Walleye** - Good: Use a lure imitating a shiner or sucker fished in the deeper pools. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Try live bait fished around current breaks or impoundments.

### Volga Lake

The lake is completely covered with ice. Do not walk on ice. Water clarity good.

Area rivers are starting to freeze over. Most lakes are partially or totally iced over. Temperatures in the low 40's to below freezing at night. Iowa's first shotgun deer season opens Saturday; wear plenty of orange. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports have been good to excellent for walleye on the Cedar River; concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very productive.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams in the Manchester District are in excellent condition. All three trout hatchery offices are still closed.

### Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

No reports for the Maquoketa River this past week.

### Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

**Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish; concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very productive.

### Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

Reports have been good to excellent for walleye and northern pike on the Wapsipinicon River, concentrate on the deeper overwintering holes. Pike have been biting really well on portions of the Upper Wapsipinicon. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve large running crankbaits for active fish. Jig and plastics tipped with or without live bait has been very productive. **Northern Pike** - Good: Larger spinnerbaits are working well on the Upper Wapsipinicon River.

Interior rivers are in excellent condition and can provide some excellent angling opportunities. Area lakes are starting to form ice as water temperatures decrease. Deer hunting season opens this weekend through December 20<sup>th</sup>; wear blaze orange and be aware of hunting activity. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information. All three trout hatcheries are closed; please call ahead to set up any appointments you need.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

Pool level is 7.7 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable over the next week. Water temperature is 35 degrees. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: As water temperatures cool, slow presentations down for bass in backwater lakes. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills should be in overwintering locations. Fish slow with a small piece of worm just off the bottom along weed beds. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow along the brush piles and weed edge lines in slack water off of side channels and sloughs. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try minnows fished under a bobber in 6-8 feet of water in the backwaters. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Northern Pike** - Good: Northern are on the feed in shallow backwaters later afternoon as the water warms up.

### Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level at Lynxville is 14.6 feet with a slight fall expected. Water temperature is 37 degrees at the Lock & Dam. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: As water temperatures cool, slow presentations down for bass in backwater lakes. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills should be in overwintering locations. Fish slow with a small piece of worm just off the bottom along weed beds. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow along the brush piles and weed edge lines in slack water off of side channels and sloughs. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try minnows fished under a bobber in 6-8 feet of water in backwater lakes. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Northern Pike** - Good: Northern are on the feed in shallow backwaters later afternoon as the water warms up.

### Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tailwater level has dropped to 6.6 feet with a gradually fall expected. Water temperature is 34 degrees at the dam. **Walleye** - Good: Try jigging spoons or a jig tipped with a minnow in tailwaters of Lock and Dams. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills should be in overwintering locations. Fish slow with a small piece of worm just off the bottom along weed beds. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: As water temperatures cool, slow presentations down for bass in backwater lakes. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a jig and minnow along the brush piles and weed edge lines in slack water off of side channels and sloughs. **BlackCrappie** - Good: Try minnows fished under a bobber in 6-8 feet of water in backwater lakes. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with jigs in tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Northern Pike** - Good: Northern are on the feed in shallow backwaters later afternoon as the water warms up.

Upper Mississippi River levels have stabilized. Water quality has improved with fewer weeds floating downstream. Water temperature has dropped into the mid-30's with some skim ice forming in backwaters. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches long

must be released immediately. Only one walleye greater than 27 inches can be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily harvest limit of 6 and possession of 12.

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### Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are expected to recede this week. The water level is 7.4 feet at the Lock and Dam and 9.1 feet at the RR bridge. The water temperature is around 39 degrees. The water clarity is good. **Northern Pike** - Good: Flashy spinnerbaits in eddy areas or along weed lines will take this toothy predator. They are still actively eating shad in around 4 feet of water. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Find bass on wood in backwater areas. They are also found chasing shad in these vegetated backwaters. Try gaudy white or green spinnerbaits. Slow way down in cold water temperatures. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are being taken out of brush piles and marina areas on small jigs and minnows. Anglers are moving from log pile to log pile with 2 or 3 fish being taken from each. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year.

### Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level is 7.4 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam and is receding. The water temperature is around 39 degrees. The water clarity is good. **Repairs are complete on the Bellevue City Ramp and it's open.** **Northern Pike** - Good: Try flashy spinners fished along weed edges in backwater areas. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Bass are on wood structure in deeper backwater areas. Some are also seen chasing shad in vegetated backwater areas. Use gaudy spinnerbaits to catch large bass before the hard water hits. Slow way down as the water cools and fish during the peaks of sunny days. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are being taken in backwater areas in fallen wood structure.

### Mississippi River Pool 14

Water level are receding and are 6.9 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 10.6 feet at Camanche and 5.7 feet at LeClaire. Water temperature is around 39 degrees. Water clarity is fair. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Bass are in deeper backwater areas hiding in wood structure. Bass are heavily feeding on shad in vegetated backwaters such as Cattail Slough. Slow way down on the retrieves as the water cools. **Northern Pike** - Good: Use flashy spinners along backwater shorelines or in the tailwaters for this aggressive fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try in the shallow areas of deep backwaters, like near Rock Creek or Cattail Slough. **Walleye** - Good: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the Lock and Dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year. **Black Crappie** - Good: Look for brush piles in backwater sloughs. Most anglers are using small jigs, some tipped with minnows. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair: Find this colorful fish in Rock Creek and Joyces Slough. Most anglers catch them along with bluegills in backwaters with fallen wood.

### Mississippi River Pool 15

Water level is 7.6 feet at Rock Island and is receding. The water temperature is near 39

degrees. Water clarity is fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Most walleye and sauger angling is near the lock and dam in 15 to 30 feet of water. Jig and minnow is commonly used this time of year.

Water temperature is in the upper 30's. Water level is receding throughout the district. Tailwater walleye fishing is underway. If you have any fishing questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-880-8781.

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

Tailwater stage is 7.30 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is falling. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the lock chamber and in Sylvan Slough. **Sauger** - Fair: Some saugers are being caught downstream from the lock chamber. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

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

Tailwater stage is 5.90 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. Big Timber is skimmed over with ice. Unsafe ice conditions. **Walleye** - No Report: Some anglers have been out trying to catch walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Sauger** - No Report: Some anglers have been out trying to catch saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

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

Tailwater stage is 6.95 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been hit or miss. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the dam. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the dam.

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

Tailwater stage is 4.06 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is falling. River stage is 10.04 feet at Burlington. River stage is 525.79 feet at Ft. Madison. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for this pool. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes in the tailwaters. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages have been slowly falling the past few days and are forecast to continue to fall through the weekend. Main channel water temperature is 37 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been hit or miss. Backwaters are starting to skim over with ice. Unsafe ice conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

A little ice is forming around the edges and back in the trees on the south side.

### Lake Darling

Skim Ice is forming on the upper parts of the lake at night. The docks at the ramps were pulled Dec. 2. No angler activity at the lake for the last few days.

### Lost Grove Lake

A little skim ice is forming around the edges. The docks at the ramps have been pulled for the winter. The gates at the dam parking lot and down to backcast bay have been closed.

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

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### Coralville Reservoir

The lake is at normal fall pool. Skim ice has been on some of the lake this week.

### Diamond Lake

The boat dock remains in year round here, but the other facilities are closed for the winter. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs around brush piles.

### Lake Macbride

Any sized motor may be used at a maximum of 5 mph. A dock is available at the main ramp, along with a new boat slip at the main ramp and Opie Ave ramp. Water temperature this week was around 40 degrees. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Try soft plastics in 15-25 feet of water. Some fish are on the bottom while some are suspended under schools of shad. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging on or along rock in 10-20 feet of water. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Look for fish suspended over brush, stumps and rock humps in 15-20 feet of water. **Muskellunge** - Fair: Try jerk baits fished in rock banks, points, and reefs.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

The docks at main ramp and the bait shop ramp will stay in until ice up. Pit toilets are still available at main ramp. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish are being caught around brush piles. **Muskellunge** - Slow: Try jerkbaits along the dam and over rock reefs, banks, and points.

Fishing reports have been scarce since the cool down. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### Hawthorn Lake

**Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try soft plastics fished slowly around structure. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a nightcrawler around structure. You might need to sort for larger fish.

### Lake Miami

**Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around structure. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try soft plastics around the cedar tree piles. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a minnow around submerged structure.



### Lake Sugema

**Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigs fish around submerged structure and the standing timber. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use soft plastics along the rip-rapped areas and the deeper structure.

### Lake Wapello

**Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try plastics fished slowly around the cedar tree structures. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with a chunk of nightcrawler around the cedar tree piles.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

Skim ice is forming at night; shore fishing may be difficult with colder temperatures. Try small in-line spinners or jigs and twister tails for rainbow trout. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.09 msl. Recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. The Corps of Engineers have pulled their boat docks and their campgrounds and ramps are closed. State owned ramps are still open. **Walleye** - Slow: Use jig and minnow combinations around rock piles, submerged points and areas with depth changes. **White Crappie** - Slow: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow around submerged structure.

### Red Haw Lake

**Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try plastics fished slowly around submerged structure. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around deeper structure.

Very few anglers have been out. Skim ice is forming in the mornings on smaller water bodies and around the shorelines. 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: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Big Creek Lake

**Walleye** - Slow: Troll live bait rigs or crankbaits in 20 feet of water or less in the upper half of the lake near points, old roadbeds and humps.

### Lake Petocka

As of Dec. 3 the lake was covered with thin ice; warmer weather forecast will likely melt the ice in the next week. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast light weight in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float to keep above the aquatic vegetation. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

**Terra Lake**

**Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail jigs or minnows under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.