



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

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

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.

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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake has opened up with recent warm temperatures and high winds. Any ice that will form this coming week will be unsafe; there are still open water fishing opportunities near the fish house in Town Bay and near the inlet bridge. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers have picked up some fish in the fish house in Town Bay. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Pick up fish in the fish house and near the inlet bridge with a minnow fished under a bobber.

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

Most of the lake has opened up with recent warm temperatures and high winds. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

Most area lakes have opened back up due to high winds; **any remaining ice is unsafe**. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

Rainbow Trout - Fair. Trout were stocked the first week of November. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

Lakes in northcentral Iowa opened up or lost ice thickness with the recent warm weather. **Unsafe ice conditions** - the ice is too thin 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.

East Okoboji Lake

Large portions of the lake are fully open due to high winds. Areas still iced over have a thickness of 3 inches or less; use best ice safety practices if you plan to go out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

Minnewashta Lake

The panfish and crappie bite is expected to be fairly decent once ice conditions are safe enough to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A nice crappie bite can be found with a little movement around the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair.

Scharnberg Pond

Trout were stocked unannounced this fall. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout are biting on a variety of different baits. Try a worm or lure that imitates a minnow.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The lake is fully iced up, but conditions are not yet safe enough to venture out on. **Walleye** - Fair.

Spirit Lake

The lake is mostly open due to high winds; areas that are iced up have 3 or less inches of ice. Practice best ice safety if you try to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

West Okoboji Lake

The lake is mostly open due to high winds; areas that are iced up have 3 or less inches of ice. Practice best ice safety if you try to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair.

The majority of area lakes have opened back up due to high winds or have very poor ice conditions making venturing out very hazardous. If you plan to try to fish the ice, make sure you have flotation, ice picks and check ice thickness often. The forecast calls for highs in the 20's and 30's; colder weather and nights should help build ice again this coming week. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

[Cedar River \(above Nashua\)](#)

Impoundments are icing over. Ice depths vary in areas with current. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Anglers are doing well below dams from shore. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** – Fair: Use minnows under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near the bottom.

Decorah District Streams

Shotgun deer hunting season is here. Many trout streams flow through wildlife management areas where hunting occurs. Use care when fishing a stream; wear bright orange and make noise informing hunters you're present. **Brook Trout** - Good: Walk around cleared areas in stream bottom; these are trout nests or redds. Brook and brown trout eggs will not hatch for a few more months. **Brown Trout** - Good: For brownies slow to take bait, a keen eye and a fly box filled with a variety of sizes and colors makes the difference between catching and taking your pole for a walk. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Plenty of rainbows stay in the stream over the winter. Use hair jigs, spinnerbaits or small shallow water crankbaits for aggressive fish.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Few anglers have been out as ice forms. The aerator is on; avoid this area.

[Lake Meyer](#)

No angling activity. About 1.5 inches of ice with some open water areas.

[Volga Lake](#)

Ice forming is forming; **unsafe ice conditions.**

Day time temperatures in the 20's to teens at night through the weekend . Ice should reform quickly on most waterbodies. **Unsafe ice conditions.** 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 doing well on walleye on the Cedar River, especially later evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Slow: Try a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

Manchester District Streams

Area Manchester streams remain in excellent condition providing many angling opportunities for rainbow and brown trout.

[Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#)

Anglers are doing well on walleye on the Shell Rock River, especially later evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Tripoli to Troy Mills\)](#)

The Wapsipinicon River is producing some walleye opportunities, especially later evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

Interior river conditions remain favorable providing great angling opportunities. Reports on the interior rivers is that walleye fishing has slowed and the evening bite is best. The

ten day forecast does not look favorable for making ice across the state. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Lansing water level is 8.3 feet and is fluctuating. Water temperature is near 34 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions. Notice: Dredging is completed at Lansing Village Creek.** The west part of the parking lot remains closed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Fair: Panfish are moving overwintering areas away from the current. Try a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Lynxville water level is near 613.5 feet. Water temperature is 36 degrees at the Lynxville dam. **Unsafe ice conditions. Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Fair: Panfish are moving to overwintering areas away from the current. Use a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tailwater is 4.9 feet and is expected to rise slightly this week. Water temperature is 37 degrees at the Guttenberg dam. **Unsafe ice conditions. Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Fair: Panfish are moving to overwintering areas away from the current. Use a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

Upper Mississippi River levels have risen slightly this week. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Water temperatures are in the 30's. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily limit 6/possession 12.

Mississippi River Pool 12

The water level is rising and temperature is in the mid-30's. Water levels are 5.0 feet at the Lock and Dam and 7.8 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is good. At these low river levels, be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water as necessary to launch boats. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Some bass are continuing to be targeted by select anglers fishing warmer sun soaked backwater areas. Slow chatterbait presentations work best. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Try gaudy spinnerbaits along weedy edges. Pike get active on warm sun soaked days even in the cold temperatures. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jigs in tailwater. Most fish reported have been small. **Walleye** - Fair: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Expect to see more yellow perch in the creel until ice up. We have had excellent reproduction of yellow perch in the past few years.

Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level at the Bellevue Lock is rising and is currently near 4.9 feet. Water temperature is in the mid-30's in the main channel. Water clarity is good. Levels are still low; be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water necessary to float boat. A new universally accessible boat loading platform has been built at the Bellevue City ramp; if you fish with someone who has a tough time to get in the boat, consider launching here. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Some bass are still being caught using a slow chatterbait presentation in backwater areas. The bite is much more aggressive on bright sunny days. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast a gaudy white spinnerbait in shallow weedy edges. Square bill crankbaits can be deadly for pike this time of year. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: The kids' trout pond just north of the DNR station has been stocked with rainbow trout for the winter. You can only keep two trout per child. **Walleye** - Good: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. Some very large walleyes were reported this week. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Lots of small perch are being seen during fall fish surveys. The future looks bright for decent yellow perch fishing in Pool 13. Most of the fish being caught are small.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is currently rising to 5.2 feet, 9.7 feet at Camanche and 4.7 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 35 degrees in the main channel. Water clarity is good. With the low water, be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water necessary to float boat. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills and most panfish are in their winter homes - deeper backwater areas (or harbors) with no current. If not frozen over, they can still be caught on sunny days. **Pumpkinseed** - No Report: Try the Rock Creek backwaters for this very colorful sunfish species. **Sauger** - Good: Smaller sauger are being reported from the tailwaters mainly on a jig and minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. Most fishing occurs at depths greater than 20 feet.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level at Rock Island is 5.2 feet and is rising. The water temperature is near 35 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Sauger** - No Report: Try fishing in the tailwater with a

simple jig and minnow. Usually you need to fish at a depth greater than 20 feet for walleye and sauger.

Water temperatures remains in the mid-30's; we lost most of the ice in backwaters due to warm temperatures and wind. The water is low and clear, be careful not to back off the ends of ramps. If you have angling questions please call the Bellevue Fisheries Station at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.88 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to reach 6.6 feet by the middle of next week. Main channel water temperature is 41 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Try vertical jigging with minnows or plastics. Fish can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the dam or in Sylvan Slough. Some walleyes can also be caught fishing the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or plastics. Walleyes can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 3.87 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to reach 4.9 feet by the middle of next week. Main channel water temperature is around 41 degrees. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - Fair: Look for walleyes below the dam. Some walleyes can also be caught on the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.09 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to reach 5.6 feet by the middle of next week. Main channel water temperature is around 41 degrees. The bite for walleyes and saugers below the dam has slowed some, but fish are still being caught. **Sauger** - Fair: Saugers are being caught below the dam. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being caught below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught on the wing dams.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 2.20 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been rising. Main channel water temperature is around 41 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam or on the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages are forecast to begin rising over the weekend with the recent rains. Main channel water temperature has risen to 41 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Some walleye and saugers have been caught below the dams. If you have questions on fishing

Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Discovery Park Pond

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: They should be use to their new home by now; they like to stay in the corners of the pond.

Jefferson Co. Park New Pond

Some ice around the edges. The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: There was even a few nice brook trout in the mix. By now they have adjusted to their new home; look for them to be stuck tight to the habitat, but in fairly shallow.

Lake Belva Deer

Whatever skim ice that was around is long gone. Water clarity is very clear. Very little angler activity. The upper end of the lake is open to hunting. **Bluegill** - Slow: Headed out to their winter homes. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Bass are not very aggressive; try a slow presentation worked along the rocks in 8-10 feet of water.

Lake Darling

High winds and 75 degree air temperatures warmed the water to near 40 degrees. Nice whitecaps yesterday. **Bluegill** - No Report: Use baits and lures sized for ice fishing in the deep water ice fishing spots.

Lost Grove Lake

The boat docks at the ramps were pulled on December 1. The gate for the parking lot by the dam is closed for the winter. Very little angler activity lately with the weather and temperatures.

Wilson Lake

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Look for them around the dropped trees and out around the cedar trees sunk in 6 to 8 feet of water.

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

Lake Macbride

Water temperatures are around 40 degrees, but are expected to cool fast in the coming week.. The road to the main boat ramp and beach are open again.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Hawthorn Lake

Bluegill - Slow: Target areas around deeper submerged structure and rock piles; use baits that you would use during ice fishing. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Largemouth bass are not very aggressive; try slowing down spinnerbaits or rubber worms along rocky shorelines and fishing jetties.

Lake Miami

Bluegill - Slow: Try small jigs fished around the cedar tree piles; use baits you would use when ice fishing. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Use spinnerbaits and rubber worms fished along the dam and around the fishing jetties. Try slowing down your presentation with the cool water temperatures.

Lake Sugema

Bluegill – Slow: Use small jigs along the shorelines and flooded timber. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use spinnerbaits and crawdad presentations fished along the fishing jetties and other rocky shorelines. Try slowing down your presentation with the cool water temperatures.

Lake Wapello

Black Crappie - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a minnow around the cedar tree piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around the submerged structure and cedar tree piles. Vertically jig ice fishing lures. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: Use a slow presentation; bass are not very aggressive with the colder water temperatures. Try around the cedar tree piles.

Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try spoons, inline spinners or live bait under a bobber.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.53 feet msl; 904 feet msl is recreation pool. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; make sure you properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. Prairie Ridge, Island View and the Bridgeview campgrounds are closed for the season. The ramp is still open at Bridgeview and Island View high water ramp. Docks have been removed for the year. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigging around submerged structure or rock piles. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging spoons over rock piles.

Red Haw Lake

Bluegill - Slow: Look for submerged structure; these areas should hold fish. Use ice fishing lures over these structures. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Target areas around submerged structure with a slow presentation. Try rubber worms or other plastics.

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 inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Banner Lake (south)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Lake Petocka

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live bait under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Terra Lake

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

All Central Iowa waterbodies are ice free as of December 16. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Big Lake (Including Gilbert's Pond)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Anglers are still catching trout stocked this fall. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Lake Anita

Concentrate fishing in deeper structure.

Meadow Lake

Boat anglers can find fish in the cedar tree piles. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Find a deep cedar tree pile and fish minnows under a bobber. Crappie fishing can be good this time of year.

Prairie Rose Lake

Bluegill - No Report: Look for bluegills around the underwater reefs and cedar tree piles.

Viking Lake

Viking Lake is 5.5 feet below full pool. Access is compromised. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Find crappies around deep tree piles.

Lakes in the southwest district are ice free for now. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.



Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers Paddlefish Season | Tags on Sale Now - Jan. 7