



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 22](#)

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](#)**

As of Dec. 22, the lake is mostly ice covered with a few open areas mid-lake. **Unsafe ice**

**conditions;** ice is 0-3 inches. There are still open water fishing opportunities near the fish house in Town Bay.

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

As of Dec. 22, most of the lake is ice covered, but conditions are unsafe. Ice is thin and inconsistent; there are open water areas mid-lake. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Most area lakes are iced over, but still contain small areas of open water. Ice thickness is very inconsistent and ranges from 0-3 inches. **Unsafe ice conditions.** For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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#### [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.

#### [Clear Lake](#)

The lake is frozen over again. Ice thickness is 2 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Lakes in northcentral Iowa have frozen over again. **Unsafe ice conditions** - the ice is too thin for fishing. If you venture out, use caution and check ice thickness as you go. 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 lake is fully iced, but ice conditions vary from 3 - 7 inches in areas that have been iced up the longest. The lake has had small holes open throughout the lake due to high winds. Foot traffic at most is advised. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

#### [Lost Island Lake](#)

The lake has varying ice conditions with an average of around 4 inches. Check ice conditions often.

#### [Minnewashta Lake](#)

The panfish and crappie bite is expected to be fairly decent. Ice conditions are safe enough to venture out on foot; practice best ice safety and check conditions often. **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 fully iced, but ice conditions vary. The lake has had small holes open throughout the lake due to high winds. Foot traffic at most is advised. **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 iced up, but has had many seams and holes open up due to high winds. Areas that have been iced up the longest have 3 - 7 inches of ice. Practice best ice safety if you try to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair.

The majority of area lakes are fully iced over, but have many hazards with a lot of holes and seams due to high winds. If you plan to try to fish the ice, make sure you have flotation, ice picks and check ice thickness often. Temperatures in the upper 30's and 40's forecast through the weekend with much colder temperatures next 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 finding ice thick enough to drill a hole in are catching a variety of

fish. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** – Fair: Use minnows under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near the bottom.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Deer hunting season continues. 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](#)

About 1.5 - 3.5 inches of ice; ice depths are variable. Ice is very clear. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

### [Volga Lake](#)

Ice is forming with areas of open water; **unsafe ice conditions.**

Ice formation will slow with warmer temperatures, precipitation, and wind predicted through the weekend. **Most waterbodies are not safe to go out on the ice.** For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### [Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

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

Interior river conditions remain favorable providing great angling opportunities. Reports on the interior rivers is that walleye fishing has been hit-and-miss; evening bite is best. Next weeks forecast looks favorable for making ice. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### [Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Lansing water level is 8.4 feet and is expected to remain stable over the next week. Water temperature is near 32 degrees. Ice continues to form, but is not safe enough to recommend ice fishing. **Notice:** Dredging is completed at Lansing Village Creek. The west part of the parking lot remains closed. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has improved some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has improved in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

Lynxville water level is near 13.9 feet and is expected to remain stable over the next week. Water temperature is 32 degrees at the Lynxville dam. Ice continues to form, but is not safe enough to recommend ice fishing. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has improved some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has improved in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often.

### [Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Guttenberg tailwater is 5.6 feet and is expected to remain stable this week. Water temperature is 32 degrees at the Guttenberg dam. Ice continues to form, but is not safe

to recommend ice fishing. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has improved some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has improved in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often.

Upper Mississippi River levels have stabilized at lower levels. Ice continues to form, but is still not safe enough to recommend ice fishing. Water temperatures are in the low 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.

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

The water level is steady and temperature is in the low 30's. Water levels are 5.6 feet at the Lock and Dam and 8.2 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. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jigs in the tailwater. Most fish reported have been small. **Walleye** - Slow: 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** - Fair: 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 steady at near 5.9 feet. Water temperature is in the low 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. **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. **Sauger** - Good: Some sauger are being caught on jig and minnow rigs. **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. 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 steady at 5.5 feet, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 5.0 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 33 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. **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 5.6 feet and is steady. The water temperature is near 34 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 remain in the low 30's; ice is reforming in most backwaters. **Unsafe ice conditions.** The main channel 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.

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

Tailwater stage is 5.76 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to stay steady the next few days. Main channel water temperature is 35 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or plastics. Fish can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. Most fish being caught are small. **Walleye** - Slow: 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 4.39 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to stay

steady the next few days. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. Big Timber has some skim ice over it. **Unsafe ice conditions. 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 4.67 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to stay steady the next few days. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. The bite for walleyes and saugers below the dam has slowed some, but fish are still being caught. **Unsafe ice conditions. 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 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 2.24 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been steady. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions. 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 have been steady the past few days. River stages are forecast to stay fairly steady through the weekend. Main channel water temperature is 35 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Some walleye and saugers have been caught below the dams. There is some skim ice on the backwaters. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Jefferson Co. Park New Pond](#)

The pond has skimmed over with a thin layer of ice; less than 3-4 inches of ice. **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. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

#### Lake Belva Deer

Very thin ice on part of the lake; it will gone soon with the warmer weather forecast. **Bluegill** - No Report: Headed out to their winter homes.

#### Lake Darling

A calm cold night skimmed part of the lake back over with ice. Still plenty of open water. **Bluegill** - No Report: Use baits and lures sized for ice fishing in the deep water ice fishing spots.

#### Lost Grove Lake

Parts of the lake are frozen over; wind and forecast warmer weather will not help build ice.

#### Wilson Lake

Ice on parts of the lake; it should open back up later this week with the forecast warmer weather. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Look for them around the dropped trees and out around the cedar trees sunk in 6 to 8 feet of water. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

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#### 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: Try slowing down spinnerbaits and crawdad presentations along the fishing jetties and other rocky shorelines.

### 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 905.15 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.

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## 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.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

As of Dec. 22, Big Creek Lake is mostly open water with thin ice forming on the upper end of the lake.

As of Dec. 22, Central Iowa ponds and small lakes have ice conditions ranging from areas of open water to 2 inches thick. Larger lakes are mostly open with some 1 inch ice in shallow areas and coves. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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### [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. Many ponds have skim ice. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

