



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

**DON'T
BREAK
THE ICE**

NO ICE IS
100% SAFE

**AVOID OFF
COLORED
SNOW OR ICE**

ICE SHOULD BE AT LEAST...
4 INCHES THICK FOR FISHING
& **5 INCHES** THICK FOR
SNOWMOBILES



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of January 6](#)

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](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice is 7 inches thick near the boat ramp.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice is up to 8 inches near the Ice House Point boat ramp; this is where most of the ice angling has taken place so far. Ice is variable, especially in the middle and east end. There are multiple pressure seams in the middle portion of the lake. There are still open water fishing opportunities near the fish house in Town Bay. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers have picked up a few bluegills; the bite is hit-or-miss. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice is 7 inches thick near the boat ramp. Ice is variable; use caution and check thickness often.

Brushy Creek Lake

Anglers are out on foot only. Ice conditions are variable and unsafe in some areas; use caution and check the ice thickness often if venturing out. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair: Reports of keeper-sized bluegills being caught. **Yellow Perch** – Fair.

Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Conditions remain variable, with reports of up to 6-9 inches of ice in some areas and thinner ice or even open patches near the big island and Stoney Point. Use caution when venturing out and check ice thickness often. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Fair.

Lakes throughout the district have 5-10 inches of ice. Watch out for seams and waterfowl holes with open water on the bigger lakes. Use caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

Ice thickness is 5 to 7 inches. **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.

Bluebill Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches. **Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. No more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day.** **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm in open areas in the vegetation in 2 to 3 feet of water. **Walleye** – Slow: Try dead sticking a minnow. Best bite is near last light. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait in 5 to 6 feet of water. You have to stay mobile to find fish. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are biting in the Farmers beach area in 2 to 4 feet of water. Try fishing near vegetation; use a larger bait to get the bigger fish.

Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches. Be cautious of a few open water areas outside of the aeration boundary.

Fin and Feather Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches.

Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches.

Lake Smith

Ice thickness is 0 to 9 inches. Use caution near the aeration hole. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm.

Lower Pine Lake

Ice thickness is 2 to 6 inches.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Walleye** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** – Slow.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow.

Upper Pine Lake

Ice thickness is 6 inches.

Aeration systems are running at Clear Lake, Crystal Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake. Avoid any open water areas and be cautious of waterfowl holes on these lakes that may have recently frozen over. Check ice thickness often 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.

Center Lake

Caution: The lake aeration system is currently in operation, creating a large open hole.

East Okoboji Lake

The lake is fully iced with an average of 10+ inches of ice allowing for safe ATV traffic in most areas **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

Ingham Lake

Caution: The lake aeration system is currently in operation. Ice conditions very heavily around the lake; most areas have 10+ inches.

Lost Island Lake

Caution: The aeration system is currently in operation on the east side of the lake out from the nature center. This creates a large open hole in the ice. The lake has varying ice conditions with an average of 10+ inches. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of sorting may be needed.

Minnewashta Lake

The panfish and crappie bite has been fairly good with the recent onset of ice. The bite is good enough that live bait hasn't been needed to be successful. Ice conditions are safe enough to venture with ATVs with an average ice thickness of 12+ inches. **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)

Caution: The lake aeration system is currently in operation. The lake is fully iced up, with an average ice thickness of 11+ inches. Be weary of holes that have frozen over more recently on the main basin. **Walleye** - Fair.

Spirit Lake

The lake is fully iced, but conditions can vary in areas that had open holes until recently. Ice thickness is 10+ inches in most places. **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 fully iced up, but has had many seams and holes that have more recently frozen up. Bays and areas that have been iced up the longest have around 10+ inches of ice. Practice best ice safety if you try to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair.

All walleye between 19 and 25 inches must be immediately released unharmed at Big Spirit Lake, East and West Okoboji Lakes, Upper Gar Lake, Minnewashta Lake, Lower Gar Lake and Storm Lake; no more than one walleye longer than 25-inches can be taken per day. The majority of area lakes have 10+ inches of ice allowing for safe ice fishing. ATV traffic has been prevalent in areas with thicker ice. Watch out for holes and seams on bigger lake basins. Make sure you have flotation, ice picks and check ice thickness often. The forecast through the weekend calls for continued colder temperatures which should help create even better ice conditions. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Casey Lake (aka Hickory Hills Lake)

Anglers are catching bluegill and yellow perch fishing near structure. Use electronics to help you find suspended fish. **Bluegill** - Good: Try an ice jig tipped with a waxworm fished off the bottom near structure. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm or try jigging small crankbaits or spinnerbaits.

Manchester District Streams

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

No reports for interior rivers this past week. Ice conditions are favorable With the recent arctic weather; use extreme caution when venturing out. There have been few reports with the winds and extreme cold weather. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Lansing water level dropped to 8 feet and is expected to level off. Ice continues to build, but it is extremely variable with snow cover. Use caution and check ice often before crossing sloughs and areas with any current. **Notice:** Dredging is completed at Lansing Village Creek. The west part of the parking lot remains closed. **Black Crappie** - Fair:

Fish backwaters with zero current just off the bottom. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms in the shallow backwaters with no current. Anglers are doing a lot of sorting. Release the small ones alive; they will be keepers next year. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northern have been caught in backwaters using shiners on a tip up/down. **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. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try jigs tipped with a minnow fished in shallows with no current.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Lynxville water level has fallen slightly to 614/4 feet and is expected to stabilize. Ice continues to build, but it is extremely variable with snow cover. Use caution and check ice often before crossing sloughs and areas with any current. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish backwaters with zero current just off the bottom. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms in the shallow backwaters with no current. Anglers are doing a lot of sorting. Release the small ones alive; they will be keepers next year. **Northern Pike**- Fair: Some northern have been caught in backwaters using shiners on a tip up/down. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try jigs tipped with a minnow fished in shallows with no current.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tailwater is 5.7 feet and is expected to remain stable. Ice continues to build, but it is extremely variable with snow cover. Use caution and check ice often before crossing sloughs and areas with any current. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish backwaters with zero current just off the bottom. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms in the shallow backwaters with no current. Anglers are doing a lot of sorting. Release the small ones alive; they will be keepers next year. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northern have been caught in backwaters using shiners on a tip up/down. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try jigs tipped with a minnow fished in shallows with no current.

Upper Mississippi River levels fell slightly this week. Ice depth in backwaters is averaging around 4 to 5 inches. Use caution on areas with current with variable ice conditions due to snow cover. 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 steady and temperature is in the low 30's. Water levels are 5.4 feet at the Lock and Dam and 8.0 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is good. Boat ramps are nearly all frozen in. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills are commonly being caught in nearly all the marina areas and deeper backwater lakes. **Sauger** - No Report: The ramps are iced in. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Expect to see more yellow perch as winter progresses. 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

near freezing in the main channel. Water clarity is good. The Bellevue Boat ramp is iced in as of Jan. 5; boat launching is not possible. The viewing of bald eagles at the Bellevue Lock and Dam is fantastic right now as they are feeding on dead shad. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice thickness reports have varied, but when good ice most anglers are reporting plenty of gills. **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** - No Report: The ramp is iced in. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Lots of small perch are being seen during fish surveys. The future looks bright for decent yellow perch fishing in Pool 13.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is steady at 5.3 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 4.4 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 33 degrees in the main channel. Water clarity is good. Most ramps on Pool 14 are frozen in; boat launching is not possible. **Sauger** - No Report: Smaller sauger are being reported from the tailwaters mainly on a jig and minnow. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Lots of small perch are in the system; the future looks bright for yellow perch fishing in Pool 14.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level at Rock Island is 5.8 feet and is steady. The water temperature is near 33 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.

Ice fishing is well underway; make sure you have a safety plan as Mississippi River ice can be unpredictable. Be aware of places with flowing water or where ice looks discolored. The main channel water is low and clear and most fishing ramps are now frozen in. If you have angling questions please call the Bellevue Fisheries Station at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.06 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. The Marquette St. boat ramp is inaccessible due to the main channel being frozen up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.28 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. The main channel is frozen up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.68 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been rising the past few days. The Toolsboro ramp is inaccessible due to the main channel freezing up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 1.83 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been rising

the past few days. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

The tailwaters are inaccessible due to the main channel freezing up. Tailwater stages have been on the rise. We have not received much for ice fishing reports or ice conditions this week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Ice thickness is between 1 1/2 to 2 inches thick.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Ice started to form over the weekend. Ice thickness was about 2 inches on Jan. 5.

[Lake Darling](#)

The lake was pretty much ice free last Friday. Just over two inches of ice out about 12 feet from shore right now.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Most of the ice is around 2 1/2 inches thick; might be able to find 3 inches in a few spots.

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

[Diamond Lake](#)

As of Jan. 5, ice is reported as 3-5 inches. Use caution if venturing out; thickness is variable.

[Green Castle Lake](#)

Ice conditions are reported as about 4 inches.

[Hannen Lake](#)

As of Jan. 5, there is 1-4 inches of variable ice; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[Iowa Lake \(Iowa Co.\)](#)

Ice is reported as 1-4 inches; **unsafe ice conditions as of Jan. 5**.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake froze over on Jan. 2; as of Jan. 5, there is 1-3 inches of ice. **Ice fishing is not recommended**; conditions should improve throughout the week. Extremely variable ice depending on location.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is from skim to 3 inches. Conditions should improve this week. **As of Jan. 5, ice fishing is not recommended**.

[Sand Lake](#)

Ice conditions were reported as about 4 inches, but being a large quarry, thicknesses could vary. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

As of Jan. 5, there is 4-6 inches of ice in most places; there could be less in others. Use caution if venturing out. The aeration system may be turned on next week.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

Ice thickness is reported as 3-4 inches in backwaters; use caution if venturing out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows at sunrise for best action. **Bluegill** - Fair: A few smaller fish were caught on waxies.

All area lakes are frozen over; not all lakes have uniform thickness. Some lakes may have "safe" ice while many are still unsafe. Check ice thickness often and use caution before venturing out. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Ice thickness varies. Use caution and drill lots of test holes.

[Lake Miami](#)

Use caution as ice thickness varies. Drill test holes as you venture out.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Ice thickness varies; use caution. Geese will create areas of open water.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Ice thickness varies; use caution. The thickest ice was about 3 inches.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.53 feet msl; 904 feet msl is recreation pool. Ice thickness varies; use caution and drill test holes. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; make sure you properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Ice thickness varies; use caution. There was open water on Jan. 3.

Ice conditions vary across each lake. Use caution and drill test holes. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Big Creek Lake](#)

As of Jan. 5, Big Creek Lake had 6 inches of ice at the boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: With ice conditions improving, target crappies in the evenings over brush piles and

roadbeds in the middle part of the lake using glow jigs with waxworms or live minnows. **Bluegill** - Fair: Early ice anglers are catching bluegills over brush in the bays on the lower half of the lake.

Lake Petocka

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Catch trout through the ice with jigging spoons tipped with multiple waxworms or just a hook with live minnow. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

As of Jan. 5, Central Iowa ponds and lakes have ice thickness ranging from 5 to 8 inches. Check ice thickness often, especially south of I-80 where there is snow on the ice. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Lake Anita

Anglers fishing Lake Anita this week found 5 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** - Good: Anglers are catching 7.5 inch bluegills in the campground arm of the lake.

Meadow Lake

Meadow Lake will provide good fishing this winter. Find a cedar tree pile for best success.

Orient Lake

Orient has a good bluegill and crappie population with a chance to catch a bonus walleye or yellow perch.

Prairie Rose Lake

Ice anglers were finding bluegills in tree piles this week. **Black Crappie** - No Report: There is a small population of large black crappies in the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Look for underwater tree piles to catch 8.5 inch bluegill.

Viking Lake

Viking Lake will provide good bluegill and black crappie fishing this winter. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Find crappies around deep tree piles that are close to the creek channel. There is a good population of black crappie in the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bluegill size has improved with the drawdown.

Lakes have 4 to 6 inches of ice over most of the district. Use caution when venturing out. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

Geese are keeping a large area of open water between the beach and campground.

Three Mile Lake

Geese are keeping an area of open water on the south end of the lake.

Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 3 to 6 inches. Very limited ice fishing activity observed so far due to the highly variable ice conditions. Ice fishing is not recommended at this time. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

