



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



**Freeze time  
with your favorite  
fishing buddy.**



## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Feb. 17](#)

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**

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 11 inches near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Keeper-sized bluegill have been picked up this week. Use waxworms fished on a small jig in 10-15 feet of water near structure.

### [Bacon Creek Lake](#)

About 1,500 rainbow trout were stocked this winter. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

The winter aeration system in Town Bay is currently operating. Ice thickness is around 13 inches near the Ice House Point boat ramp; this is where most of the ice angling has taken place. Use caution - there are pressure seams and areas of open water around Lakewood Point and in the middle of the east basin. There are open water fishing

opportunities near the fish house in Town Bay. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers have had the best luck around the Gunshot Hill area. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### Brushy Creek Lake

Ice conditions are variable; the thickest ice is by the big island near the south boat ramp and in the area around the north boat ramp. These areas are where most of the ice fishing is taking place. Conditions are more variable in the middle portion of the lake; there is thinner ice and a seam running across the big part of the lake. Use caution and check the ice thickness often when venturing out. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Slow.

### Moorland Pond

About 1,500 rainbow trout were stocked this winter. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Ice thickness is around 15-18 inches in most areas. Conditions remain variable; there is open water and recently frozen over areas that are thin near the big island, and thin areas near Stoney Point and the little island. Use caution when venturing out and check ice thickness often. All walleye between 19 and 25-inches must be immediately released unharmed at Storm Lake; no more than one walleye longer than 25-inches can be taken per day. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are picking up some walleye; best bite is during low-light hours. **White Bass** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Anglers are picking up fish; sorting is needed.

Lakes throughout the district have roughly 10-18 inches of ice. Watch out for seams and waterfowl holes with open water on the bigger lakes. Recent warm temperatures have degraded the ice on some areas in the southern part of the district. Use caution and check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Blue Pit

Ice thickness is 12 to 14 inches. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try a bright colored jigging spoon tipped with bait in 2 to 4 feet of water. 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

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 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.** **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try a minnow or jigging spoon near edge of the rushes. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or a plastic bait near the edge of the rushes or open areas in the vegetation in 2 to 3 feet of water. **Walleye** – Fair: Use a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow or cut bait in 8 to 10 feet of water. Best bite is after sunset. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait in 8 to 10 feet of water. You have to stay

mobile to find fish. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are biting 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 20 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a minnow near the edge of the dredge cut. **Bluegill** – Slow.

### Lake Smith

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 inches. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms. Best bite is early morning and the last hour of light.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms near vegetation in 2 to 4 feet of water. **Walleye** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Try a small minnow near vegetation.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms in 2 to 3 feet of water.

Aeration systems are running at Clear Lake, Crystal Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake. Avoid any open water areas. 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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### Center Lake

Ice thickness is around 13 inches. **Caution:** The lake aeration system is currently in operation, creating a large open hole.

### East Okoboji Lake

Most of the lake is fully iced with an average of 18+ inches of ice allowing for safe ATV traffic in most areas. Be cautious of the open holes and seams that still persist. Panfishing has been good out from the Ritz; some sorting is needed. Try heavy tungsten jigs, plastics and baits. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait.

### Ingham Lake

Ice conditions very heavily around the lake; most areas have 17+ inches. **Caution:** The lake aeration system is currently in operation.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice conditions vary with an average of 17+ inches. **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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of sorting may be needed.

### Minnewashta Lake

Ice conditions are safe enough to venture with ATVs with an average ice thickness of 18+ inches. The panfish and crappie bite has been fairly good. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A nice crappie bite can be found with a little movement around the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair.

### Scharnberg Pond

Trout were stocked this winter; fish should be biting well. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Brook Trout** - Good. **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, with an average ice thickness of 19+ inches. **Caution:** The lake aeration system is currently in operation. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Spirit Lake

The lake is fully iced; watch out for areas that had open goose holes until recently. Ice thickness is 18+ 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

Ice thickness is 18+ inches in most places; there still are a handful of seams usually running from points. Know where trouble areas are before you venture on or off the ice. Panfishing has slowed a bit; with a little movement on the north end and Little Emerson Bay you may be able to catch a good amount of fish. Try heavy tungsten jigs, plastics or baits. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait. **Bluegill** - Good: Many anglers have been successful off Triboji on the north end of the lake. Try jigging with tube jigs or a tungsten jig and live bait.

Most area lakes have 18+ inches of ice. Watch out for iced over holes and seams running across the lakes. Be sure you know a safe route on and off the ice. Bring safety essentials like flotation, ice picks and a friend. Area lakes have 1-3 inches of snow coverage. The forecast calls for a mix of warmer and freezing temperatures. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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## NORTHEAST

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice thickness is 12 to 16 inches. Use caution when crossing areas with flow. Check ice thickness often. Anglers are catching a variety of fish. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Bluegill** - Good: Try waxworms and spikes. **Walleye** – Fair: Use minnows under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near the bottom.

### **Decorah District Streams**

The 2022 trout stream stocking calendar is ready for download on our [trout fishing website](#). Wildlife management areas are not plowed in the winter; use care when parking along a plowed road. Winter trout fishing is a great time to explore new streams and enjoy opportunities with fewer anglers out. Water clarity is excellent. Be prepared to blend into the background for wary fish. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Insect hatches are starting to take place on sunny afternoons. Use midge, minnow or scud patterns for fish looking to get more bang for their effort. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Murky melt water will soon excite

brownies. Try spinner or crankbaits near or around structure. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Rainbow Trout are coloring up for their spawning season. Hatchery hold overs remain in the stream teasing anglers. Use small spinnerbaits or hair jigs floating past structure.

### Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is about 16 inches. Water clarity is excellent at 9 feet. Areas around the aerator remain open; use caution. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing in the sharp drop-offs. Finicky crappies may bite as you slowly raise the lure. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm or spike fished near structure.

### Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 18-20 inches. Best bite is early morning and before dusk. Find fish in 8-10 feet of water and around brush piles. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Be prepared to change lures often to trick those educated fish. **Bluegill** – Goof: Catching all sizes of bluegills. Anglers with cameras see lots of fish looking at bait, but not biting. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: A few nice-sized bass are finding their way into the creel.

### Volga Lake

Ice thickness is about 12-14 inches. Best bite is is early morning or pre-dusk. **Black Crappie** - Good: Bright colored ice jigs tipped with a waxworm works well, especially for light biters. **Bluegill** - Good: Find fish around brush piles about 1-2 feet off the bottom.

Weekend weather varying widely from patchy blowing snow on Friday with wind chills below zero to mostly sunny and mid 40s on Sunday. Ice thickness on most waterbodies is 12+ inches. 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)

Anglers are catching bluegill. **Bluegill** - Fair: Best bite is evenings or early mornings with small presentations.

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

Reports of some crappie being caught on backwater ice; use extreme caution when on river ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Locate structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or try a minnow on a dead stick. The few crappie being caught are quality-sized.

### Heritage Pond

Trout were stocked in the fall; some of these stocked trout remain in the lake. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Try jigging flashy jigs with a blade to entice rainbow trout to take your lure or jig.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams are in excellent condition. Very clear water conditions; use subtle presentations and approach fish from downstream. Sunday could provide some runoff

on our streams which can often be beneficial in catching brown trout. **Brown Trout** – Fair. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

### Martens Lake

Anglers are catching bluegill, crappie and some yellow perch. Move often to locate fish; spots are hit-and-miss. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Locate structure and use electronics to find suspended fish. Try a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm or a minnow on a dead stick. The few crappie being caught are quality-sized. **Bluegill** - Good: Best bite is evenings or early mornings with small presentations. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are catching some 9- to 11-inch perch. Try a waxy on a jig or a jigging rapala.

### North Prairie Lake

Trout were stocked in the fall; some of these stocked trout remain in the lake. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Try jigging flashy jigs with a blade to entice rainbow trout to take your lure or jig.

### Silver Lake (Delaware)

High catches of small bluegill. Harvest-sized fish are rare, but a good location to catch some fish with the kids. **Bluegill** - Slow: Best bite is evening or early morning with small presentations. Use a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm fished just off of the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Try fishing tip-ups with a large shiner or chub.

Ice thickness is 8 inches on most lakes and ponds in east-central Iowa. Remain cautious while ice fishing; avoid areas with water current or discolored ice. Ice fishing is slow in and around the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Best bite is morning and evening. Call area/local bait shops for the most up to date reports. Contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

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## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

Lansing water level is just under 8 feet. Ice continues to build, but it is extremely variable with snow cover. Use caution and check ice thickness 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** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm a few feet under the ice to mid-depth. Best bite is mid-morning and again later afternoon. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a waxworm about mid-water column to just off the bottom. Anglers are doing a lot of sorting. Release the small ones alive; they will be keepers next year. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Some northern have been caught in backwaters using shiners on tip-downs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are hanging out in weed edges on the slopes of backwater cuts. Jig a waxie or minnow a foot or two off the bottom.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

Lynxville water level is near 614 feet. 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. Anglers are crossing Wyalusing Slough at Sny Magill to fish down in



Methodist Lake. Stay on well traveled paths in areas of potential current. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm a few feet under the ice to mid-depth. Best bite is mid-morning and again later afternoon. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a waxworm about mid-water column to just off the bottom. 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 tip-downs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are hanging out in weed edges on the slopes of backwater cuts. Jig a waxie or minnow a foot or two off the bottom.

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

Guttenberg tailwater is 5.7 feet. 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** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm a few feet under the ice to mid-depth. Best bite is mid-morning and again later afternoon. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with a waxworm about mid-water column to just off the bottom. 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 tip-downs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch are hanging out in weed edges on the slopes of backwater cuts. Jig a waxie or minnow a foot or two off the bottom.

Upper Mississippi River levels remain stable. Fish are not as active mid-winter; move often to find fish. Ice depth in backwaters is more than 12 inches. Ice on areas with current varies; use caution. 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. Water levels are 5.7 feet at the Lock and Dam and 8.4 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is good. Boat ramps are all frozen in. **Bluegill** - Slow: Poor catches have been reported; size has been small. Hopefully late ice will produce better results. **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 receding at near 5.9 feet. The Bellevue Boat ramp is completely frozen in. The viewing of bald eagles at the Bellevue Lock and Dam is spectacular as they are feeding on dead shad. The city parking lot is an easy location to watch the action. **Black Crappie** - Fair: An occasional report of anglers catching a nice crappie at times; use a tip-up with minnows. **Bluegill** - Slow: Reports of slow winter fishing with brief periods of decent bites. **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 Bellevue Ramp is frozen in. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Lots of small perch are being seen during fish surveys. The future looks bright for decent yellow perch fishing in Pool 13. Some nice catches of yellow perch; fishing has been boom or bust as schools move around under the ice.

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

The water level is steady at 5.0 feet at the Fulton Lock and Dam, 9.5 feet at Camanche and 4.3 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. Bald Eagle viewing in the tailwaters has been very good below the dam. **Bluegill** - Slow: Reports of spotty catches out of Rock Creek and Catfish Slough; most anglers report poor catches. **Sauger** - No Report: It remains difficult to launch out of frozen ramps. **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 steady at 4.8 feet. The water temperature is near 33 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Bluegill** - No Report: Not a lot of backwater bluegill habitat exists on Pool 15 outside of marina areas. **Sauger** - No Report: Launching is difficult in Pool 15; boat ramps are frozen in.

Lots of ice fishing throughout the district; 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. Most ice is up to 12 inches in the backwaters. The main channel water is low and clear; boat ramps are frozen in. 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 4.73 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been fairly steady. As of Feb. 16, the Marquette Street boat ramp is open; some anglers have been tailwater fishing. Snow in the forecast could change ramp conditions. We have not received any ice fishing reports for this pool this week. Warm weather and rain the past couple of days could create unsafe ice conditions, especially along shorelines. **Sauger** - Fair: Some saugers have been caught below the Lock and Dam in the Quad Cities. Use hair jigs and minnows or nightcrawlers; mostly small saugers have been caught.

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

Tailwater stage is 3.55 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been slowly falling. As of Feb. 16, the ramps at Muscatine were open; some anglers have been out tailwater fishing. Ramp conditions may change with snow in the forecast. We have not received any reports on ice fishing in Big Timber. Ice conditions can be variable in Big Timber; check ice thickness often as you move. Warm weather and rain the past few days could create unsafe ice. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the lock and dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. **Walleye** - No Report: Some anglers were out this past week. Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers.

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

Tailwater stage is 3.85 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been falling. As of Feb. 16th, the Toolsboro ramp was being reported as open. Ramp conditions may change with snow in the forecast. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week. Warm weather and rain this past week could create



unsafe ice conditions. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. **Walleye** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers.

### Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 2.45 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to slowly rise the next few days. We have not received any reports on tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week. Warm weather and rain this past week could create unsafe ice conditions.

There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers below the lock and dams. Use caution and check ice thickness often as you move. Warm weather and rain the past few days could create unsafe ice conditions, especially along shorelines. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

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## SOUTHEAST

### Big Hollow Lake

The ice is turning milky in color and starting to pull back from the shoreline as melt water enters the lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Moved into the "late ice" time of the ice fishing season. Finding fish will be the biggest task.

### Lake Belva Deer

Warm weather and wind is starting to work on the ice. It's still in pretty good condition, but start to look for "bad spots" **Bluegill** - Fair: Fishing is hit-or-miss. Move around often to find fish; they are more out in the open and away from the trees

### Lake Darling

Recent warm weather has turned the ice milky and started to pull it away from the shoreline. **Bluegill** - Fair: Fishing is hit-or-miss; move around often to find fish.

### Lost Grove Lake

Entering into late ice fishing conditions. Be prepared to move and drill more than a few holes to find fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Move often to find fish - don't wait for them to come to you. Find the "right" spot and you can do well.

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

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### Diamond Lake

**Bluegill** - Fair: Use jigs or waxies around brush piles. **White Crappie** - Good: Most fish are 8 inches; a few bigger fish have been mixed in.

### Green Castle Lake

Ice thickness is about 18 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Keeper-sized fish have been hit-and-miss this week.

### Hannen Lake

Poor water clarity. There is an ice fishing tournament here on Saturday. **Bluegill** – Slow.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Ice thickness is 13-18 inches. Best bite is mornings and evenings. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch 8- to 11-inch crappie in deeper trees or in the basin in 16-18 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch 6- to 8-inch bluegill in trees or in the basin in 16-18 feet of water.

### Lake Macbride

**Black Crappie** - Slow: A few fish are being caught on minnows primarily at sunset. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigs or waxies fished near structure. Size is marginal at best.

### Otter Creek Lake

The lake is drained for a restoration project.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

**Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Smaller fish have been caught on any structure in 15 feet of water or less.

### Rodgers Park Lake

Ice thickness is reported as up to 14 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow: Size has been decent. Try jigs or waxies fished around brush.

### Sand Lake

**Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use small spoons or jigs tipped with waxies. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Union Grove Lake

Ice thickness is about 15 inches. The aeration system is on; there is open water near the dam area. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing in the brush piles in 10-15 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try fishing around brush in 10-15 feet of water. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Most fish are smaller.

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

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### Hawthorn Lake

Ice thickness varies; use caution. **Bluegill** - No Report: Try small jigs over submerged habitat. Look for rock piles and changes in depth.

### Lake Miami

Ice thickness varies; use caution. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jig and minnows over and around the cedar tree piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use jigs and waxworms around brush piles and submerged structure.

### Lake Miss (Tug Fork West)

Ice thickness varies; use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm around structure.

### Lake Sugema

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

**Crappie** - Slow: Try small jigs tipped with a waxworm around the flooded timber or rock piles.

#### Lake Wapello

Ice thickness varies; use caution. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows in brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use jigs and waxworms in brush piles.

#### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 904.75 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. **White Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows in brush piles. Most fishing activity has been in the South Fork arm of the lake. The Buck Creek and Honey Creek arms also hold fish if you can find the submerged habitat.

#### Red Haw Lake

Ice thickness varies; use caution. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm around habitat structures. The shoreline next to the campground has submerged habitat placed several years ago.

Ice conditions vary across each lake; use caution. 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: Catch trout through the ice with jigging spoons tipped with multiple waxworms or just a hook with live minnow. Start by fishing within 20 yards of shore. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

#### Big Creek Lake

As of Feb. 17, ice thickness is 15 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Target crappies in the early morning and evenings over brush piles and roadbeds in the middle part of the lake; use glow jigs with waxworms or live minnows. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegills over brush in the mid and lower half of the lake. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Catch wipers mid-lake over the creek channel with jigging spoons with minnows.

#### Don Williams Lake

**Black Crappie** - Slow: Few crappie are being caught during the day. Try glow jigs and waxworms or live minnows in the evenings.

#### 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 Feb. 17, Central Iowa ponds and lakes have ice thickness averaging 12 to 16 inches. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-

### Big Lake (Including Gilbert's Pond)

**Rainbow Trout** – Fair: 1000 rainbow trout were stocked this winter. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Lake Anita

Ice thickness is 9 inches. **Black Crappie** – Slow: The crappie bite has been slow during the day. Anglers fishing late afternoon until dark are catching some crappies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching 7.5 inch bluegills in the campground arm of the lake.

### Lake Manawa

Anglers report good fishing around Tin Can Dyke and the dredge cuts. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Walleye** - Fair: A few walleyes were caught along Tin Can Dyke with minnows. **White Crappie** - Slow.

### Littlefield Lake

Ice thickness is 10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: There is a small population of large black crappies. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill fishing is good around any of the cedar tree piles in the lake. Sorting is needed for larger fish.

### Meadow Lake

Ice thickness is 9 inches. Find a cedar tree pile for best success. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite picks up after 5 p.m. **Bluegill** - Fair: Sorting is needed, but anglers are catching 8-inch bluegill in the cedar tree piles.

### Orient Lake

Orient has a good bluegill and crappie population with a chance to catch a bonus walleye or yellow perch. **Black Crappie** - Slow: There is a good population of 8 to 9-inch black crappie. Best bite is late afternoon. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers report catching 8-inch bluegill.

### Prairie Rose Lake

Ice anglers are finding bluegills in the new cedar tree piles placed in the lake. **Black Crappie** - No Report: There is a small population of large black crappies. **Bluegill** - Fair: The DNR placed three new tree piles in the channel north of the pumphouse.

### Viking Lake

Ice thickness is 7 inches. The geese have expanded the open water area; stay away from the geese. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Look for deep tree piles that are close to the creek channel. Best bite is early morning bite using waxworms. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegill size has improved with the drawdown. Anglers can sort for 8-inch fish.

Southwest district lakes have 6 to 9 inches of ice. The warm windy weather is starting to erode the ice. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### Green Valley Lake

Geese are keeping a large area of open water between the beach and campground. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 11-inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm or minnows fished near deep cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles to catch bluegill up to 8.5-inches.

### Three Mile Lake

Ice thickness is about 10-12 inches; areas around concrete docks and concrete boat ramps are starting to melt at the main ramp. Geese had area of open water on the south end earlier in the winter. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm or minnows fished near the flooded timber in the upper end of the reservoir. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near the flooded timber in the upper end of the reservoir. **Walleye** - Slow: Use minnows fished along the roadbed or in the flooded timber near creek channels to catch walleye of all sizes.

### Twelve Mile Creek Lake

Ice thickness is about 10 inches off the east boat ramp. Anglers report an area of open water in the south basin and other small areas of open water.

Ice conditions continue to deteriorate after variable weather conditions. Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 8 to 10 inches. The top 2 inches of ice are poor quality; use caution and drill test holes. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.