



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

BRIA

## [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Feb. 24](#)

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

For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

## **NORTHWEST**

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 inches near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: 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; avoid areas of thin ice and open water in the middle portion of the lake around Lakewood Point and the east basin. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### Black Hawk Pits

Ice thickness is 9 inches near the boat ramp.

### 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. **Black Crappie** – Good. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** – Slow.

### Crawford Creek Impoundment

The west end of the lake is open water. Anglers have made their way out on the existing ice. Ice conditions are extremely variable; use caution and drill test holes often.

### 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 inches in most areas. Ice conditions remain variable; use caution and check ice thickness often. There is open water and recently frozen over areas that are thin near the big island, some areas along the south shore, and the little island. 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. Try minnows fished near the bottom. Most action has been at the east end of the lake.

Lakes throughout the district have roughly 8-15 inches of ice in the thickest areas. Many lakes have pockets of open water and thin ice on areas that recently froze over. 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 14 to 16 inches. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try a bright colored jigging spoon tipped with spikes. 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** - Fair: Try a minnow or jigging spoon near the edge of rushes. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or a plastic bait near the edge of rushes. **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** - Good: Use a jigging spoon tipped with bait in vegetation.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a small minnow near the edge of the dredge cut. **Bluegill** – Slow.

### Lake Cornelia

Ice thickness is 18 to 20 inches. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Small yellow bass are biting on a variety of baits.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 20 inches. **Bluegill** – Slow: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms. **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 20+ 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. **Yellow Bass** - Good: With a little movement on the basin, you should be able find a decent bite and also catch a few other species.

### Ingham Lake

Ice conditions very heavily around the lake; most areas have 18+ 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 18+ inches. **Caution:** The lake aeration system is currently in operation. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Spirit Lake

Ice thickness is 20+ inches in most places. There is a large open hole on the southwest side due to strong winds and a few days of warmer temperatures. The Marble Beach access is in very poor condition due to ice heaving along the shoreline. **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 20+ 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 near Triboji, Emerson and Smiths 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 20+ inches of ice. Watch out for open or 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 -2 inches of snow coverage. The forecast calls for a mix of warmer and frigid 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. Also try flies that look fishy. **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, northern pike, largemouth bass 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. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try fishing tip-up rigs with a live shiner or chub. **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. 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 12

The water level is steady. Water levels are 5.6 feet at the Lock and Dam and 8.2 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is good. The water level is steady. Boat ramps are all frozen in. View lots of eagles below the dam. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Try using tip-downs in your favorite Pool 12 backwater. You may have to search a bit, but they can be caught. **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 stable 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. Some eagles are on the move north; get out to see the show while you can. The city parking lot is an easy location to watch the action. **Black Crappie** - Good: Reports of nice catches of crappie. Use minnow rigs in 4 to 6 feet of water. **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. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try tip-downs or other minnow rigs in Rock Creek or Cattail Slough by Fulton. **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 4.7 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.

Anglers are ice fishing throughout the district, but winter doldrums have settled in; some good angling has been sprinkled in. Have a safety plan; Mississippi River ice can be unpredictable. Beware of places with flowing water or where ice looks discolored. The main channel water is low and clear, but 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 4.91 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been fairly steady. The Marquette Street boat ramp is open; some anglers have been tailwater fishing. Snow in the forecast could change ramp conditions. Warm weather and rain this past week created some unsafe ice conditions. **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 3.70 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been slowly falling. The ramps at Muscatine are open. Ramp conditions may change with snow in the forecast. The docks are not in at Muscatine. Warm weather and rain this past week has created unsafe ice conditions. **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 3.79 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been steady. The Toolsboro ramp is being reported as open. Ramp conditions may change with snow in the forecast. Warm weather and rain this past week has created unsafe ice conditions. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. **Walleye** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers.

### Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 1.97 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been falling the past few days. We have not received any reports on tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. Warm weather and rain this past week has created unsafe ice conditions.

There has been some tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers below the Locks and Dams. Warm weather and rain this past week created 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 around the trees was gone last weekend; several spots along the shore have gone bad. **Black Crappie** - Fair: You need to move to find fish. Be cautious and check ice thickness often.

### Lake Belva Deer

Use extreme caution around the flooded timber. It refroze, but had been open up against the trees earlier this week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Not much activity the last few days. se caution when getting close to the trees. Keep moving to find scattered fish.

### Lake Darling

Earlier this week, the ice melted away from the shore along the ripped shoreline facing south. **Bluegill** - No Report: The weather has kept angler numbers down the last couple of days.

### Lost Grove Lake

Plenty of water was on top of the ice last weekend; soft spots were starting to develop. **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** - Fair: Most fish



are 8 inches; a few bigger fish have been mixed in.

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

Ice thickness is 13-20 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. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Some fish were caught last weekend during the warm up.

#### [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.

#### [Union Grove Lake](#)

The aeration system is on; there is open water near the dam area. Best bite is afternoon or evening. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing in the brush piles in 10-15 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: 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. Warmer weather has started melting the ice around the shoreline; use caution if trying to get onto the ice.

#### [Lake Miami](#)

Warmer temperatures have deteriorated the ice. Ice thickness varies; use caution.

#### [Lake Miss \(Tug Fork West\)](#)

Ice thickness varies; use caution. The ice around the shoreline has gotten thinner. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm around structure.

#### [Lake Sugema](#)

The warm weather has deteriorated the ice. Ice thickness varies; use caution. There could be some open water areas.

#### [Lake Wapello](#)

Warm weather and wind have deteriorated the ice. Ice thickness varies; use caution.

#### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.56 feet msl; 904 feet msl is recreation pool. Ice thickness varies; use caution. Warmer weather and wind has deteriorated the ice and caused thin ice around the shoreline. Some areas of open water have developed. Lake Rathbun has

zebra mussels; make sure you properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody.

### Red Haw Lake

Warm weather has deteriorated the ice. Ice thickness varies; use caution.

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

Ice thickness is 14 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.

Central Iowa ponds and lakes have ice thickness averaging 10 to 14 inches. 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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### Littlefield Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Prairie Rose Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

**Ice conditions have deteriorated; unsafe ice conditions.** For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### Green Valley Lake

There is a large area of open water between the beach and campground.

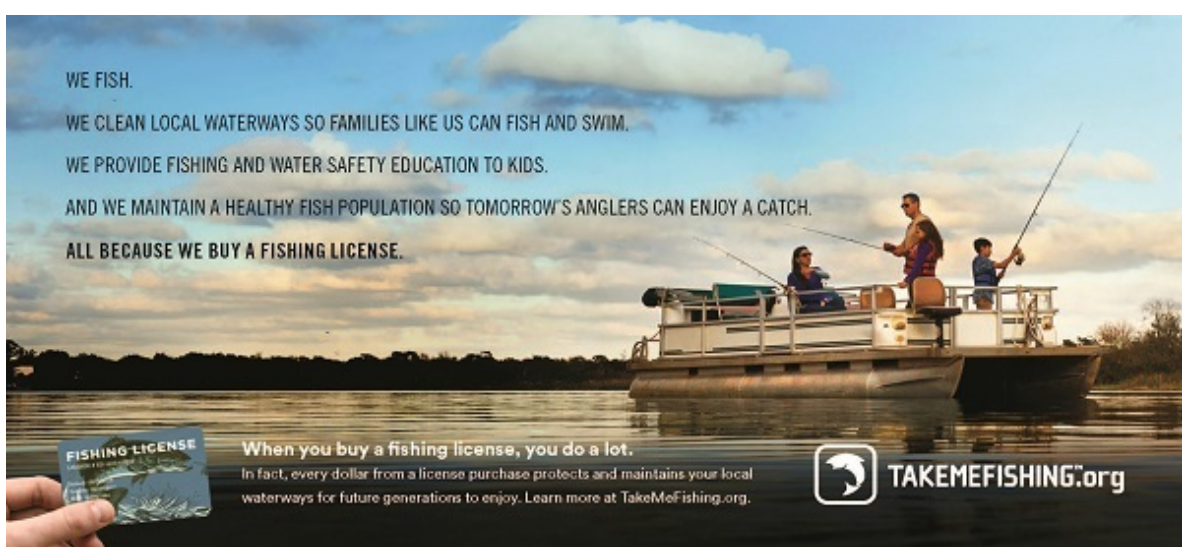
### Three Mile Lake

Open water reported along the shorelines and concrete boat ramps.

### Twelve Mile Creek Lake

Open water along the shoreline and concrete boat ramps. Lots of open water on the south side of lake.

Ice conditions continue to deteriorate after variable weather conditions. There is open water along shorelines, boat ramps, and other areas of Mount Ayr district lakes. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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WE CLEAN LOCAL WATERWAYS SO FAMILIES LIKE US CAN FISH AND SWIM.  
WE PROVIDE FISHING AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION TO KIDS.  
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