



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 Dec. 1](#)

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is covered in skim ice. The only fishing activity has been at the fish house in Town Bay - where the area under the structure is kept ice-free with a small water agitator. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish are 8- to 11-inches. Try from the fish house in Town Bay.

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

Most of the lake has been frozen over for the past week. **All ice is unsafe for ice fishing.**

Area Lakes are covered in thin ice. **All ice is unsafe for ice fishing.** With windy and warm days this next week, some areas may open up again. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

Blue Pit was recently stocked with rainbow trout. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Use spinnerbaits and small jigs.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. The daily limit is 3 with no more than one walleye longer than 22 inches may be taken per day. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Try live bait and small jigs near vegetation beds.

Rice Lake

Any water west of the North boat ramp is a waterfowl refuge and is closed to all activity from Sept. 1st through the final day of the duck season.

For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

The lake is essentially completely iced over, but with only 1-2 inches. The water level is 10 inches below crest. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow or tube jig and bobber. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Walleye** - Fair: Try crawler harnesses, crankbaits, and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Minnows work well; some sorting may be needed.

Lost Island Lake

Walleye – Good: Try spinners, crankbaits, and shallow shad raps. Evening bite is improving as the water cools.

Minnewashta Lake

Bluegill and crappie fishing has been good; some sorting may be needed.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The walleye bite has picked up as water temperatures cool. **Walleye** - Good: Use spinners, crankbaits, and long and shallow shad raps.

Spirit Lake

The lake is currently 14 inches below crest. The lake is almost entirely iced over, but with only an inch or two. **The walleye season is open. Muskellunge** - Good: Try crankbaits, buck tails, and rubber baits. **Walleye** - Good: The bite is hit-or-miss at dusk, but the day bite is improving. Many anglers have started to fish in shallower with slip bobbers along weed edges. Try spinners, crankbaits, and long and shallow shad raps; look for weed lines to troll or jig off of. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

West Okoboji Lake

Water temperature is in the mid-30s. A few bays are starting to form ice. The water level is 10 inches below crest. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Walleye** - Fair: Crawler harnesses, crankbaits, and minnows work well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

Most small to medium area lakes are completely frozen over. Most large lakes are at least partially frozen over. **No lakes currently offer safe ice for ice fishing.** Area lake levels are currently low. The extended forecast calls for cooler temperatures, which should steadily form ice. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Few anglers are out fishing. Ice is starting to form on the backwaters. Impoundment remains open. **Smallmouth Bass** - Slow: Smallie bite is variable. Try artificial lures or a lure tipped with

a minnow around rocky outcroppings or ledges. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite is steady; try artificial lures or a lure tipped with a minnow. Find fish in deeper water.

Decorah District Streams

Staff would like to thank all our trout anglers and supporters for making the 2022 catchable stream stocking season one of the best. Streams are in good condition. Hunting seasons are in full swing. First shotgun deer season opens Saturday through Wednesday. Be visible to hunters. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Please avoid walking on small areas of freshly cleaned gravel; these are trout nests or redds. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Walk carefully around freshly cleaned off gravel; these are trout nests or redds. Use flies or lures imitating small minnows. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try fishing along grassed edges, undercut banks, pools, and around boulders.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Few anglers are out as the lake starts to freeze. About 2 inches of ice reported with open water by the aerator. Water clarity is about 3 feet.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Few anglers are out as they transition from open to hard water fishing. The lake still has areas of open water.

[Volga Lake](#)

Few anglers are out. Water clarity is improving. Most of the lake remains open. Ice is forming along edges.

Breezy. Temperatures in the mid-40s to teens. Look for smaller bodies of water to start to freeze. Ice is not thick enough on larger waterbodies. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 8.2 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain steady this week. Water temperature is 34 degrees in the main channel. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has slowed in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Sauger** - Slow: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is 613.4 feet at Lynxville and is expected to recede next week. Water temperature is 37 degrees at the Lynxville dam. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has slowed in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is 4.9 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to recede next week. Water temperature is 36 degrees in the channel. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has slowed in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Sauger** - Slow: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam

tailwaters **Walleye** - Slow: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters

Upper Mississippi River levels remain low. Skim ice is forming on backwaters, but is not safe for ice fishing. Ramps are starting to ice in. Boaters let your trailers drain to keep ice off the ramp. 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. Walleye/sauger combined daily limit 6/possession 12.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The water level is 5.3 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.9 feet at the RR bridge. Water temperature is around 34 degrees; the water is clear. Use caution to avoid backing a boat off the ends of the boat ramps with the low river levels. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Nearly all panfish are in backwater areas for the winter, which are lakes with no flowing water and hopefully deep enough to not freeze to the bottom. **Sauger** - Good: The walleye and sauger bite has been up and down all year. One-eye jigs have been popular, but a simple jig and minnow is the lure of choice for many tailwater anglers.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is 5.0 feet at Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue and is stable. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. The Bellevue Boat ramp is still open; use caution to avoid backing a boat off the ends of the boat ramps with the low river levels. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Nearly all panfish are in backwater areas for the winter, which are lakes with no flowing water and hopefully deep enough to not freeze to the bottom. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The Bellevue kids trout pond is open and vegetation free. It is a nice safe place to fish with kids on warmer winter days. Please only keep two fish per child, if you plan to keep any. **Sauger** - Good: Most anglers are using a simple jig and minnow or a one-eye rig in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 5.1 feet at Fulton, 9.7 feet at Camanche and 4.5 feet at LeClaire. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is near 33 degrees. Use caution to avoid backing a boat off the ends of the boat ramps with the low river levels. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Nearly all panfish are in backwater areas for the winter, which are lakes with no flowing water and hopefully deep enough to not freeze to the bottom. **Sauger** - Good: Most anglers are fishing in the tailwaters with a jig and minnow rig.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is 5.2 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is 34 degrees. Use caution to avoid backing a boat off the ends of the boat ramps with the low river levels. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleye and sauger in the tailwater areas. Anglers often use a simple jig and minnow rig.

Fishing conditions are excellent on the Mississippi River. Boat ramps are still open as of the start of December. Water levels have stabilized. Water clarity is good. Use caution when backing off boat ramps with the low river levels. Use the minimum amount of ramp to float your boat to avoid backing off the ends of short ramps. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 5.17 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is forecast to stay fairly steady. Backwaters are frozen over with skim ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleye below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught trolling three-way rigs on the the wing-dams.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.00 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to stay fairly steady. Backwaters are frozen over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows on the wing-dams.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 3.88 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to stay fairly steady. Backwaters are frozen over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows on the wing-dams.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 1.74 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. We have not received any fishing reports for this pool this week. **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. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught on the wing-dams.

Tailwater stages are forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. Backwaters have frozen over with skim ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger has been slow. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Discovery Park Pond](#)

The cold air temperatures and strong winds have kept most anglers away the last couple of days, but the trout are still here. **Rainbow Trout:** Good - Use worms or powerbait under a bobber or they are still hitting spinners; cold water doesn't bother trout as much as it does other fish. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Lots of waves from the strong winds; some ice up on the flooded trees from the splash. Use caution on the ramps until the sun melts them off, the ramps near the water's edge will be

slick. **Bluegill** - No Report: If you get the boat back out one last time, try out from the south ramp along the old creek channel; use the same lures and techniques as you would ice fishing.

[Lake Darling](#)

The strong winds and above freezing air temperatures are keeping the lake ice-free. The docks at the ramps have been pulled for the winter. Water spray from the waves is freezing on the ramps and shoreline rocks. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Cold weather has kept most anglers off the lake. Find crappies out at their winter homes in the middle of the lake in the cedars and culvert piles. Treat it like ice fishing from a boat.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The docks at the boat ramps have been pulled out of the water for the winter. **Bluegill** - No Report: Bluegills are out in deeper water in the spots where a little later after the ice forms, you can ice fish for them.

[Wilson Lake](#)

We might still get a couple of warm days before the ice starts forming to do a little open water trout fishing. **Rainbow trout**: Good - Trout are still pretty active after the fall trout release. You can see the cedar trees and brush piles where they are hiding. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

[Lake Miami](#)

Little fishing pressure lately. Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Fishing pressure has been light. Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings, making fishing from shore difficult.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South \(Trout Pond\)](#)

Skim ice is forming; fishing from shore will be difficult. Trout were stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try small in-line spinners or small jigs.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.54 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Water temperature is in the low 40s. Skim ice is forming in the coves, making fishing difficult. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Walleye** - No Report: [Effective January 1, 2023 there will be a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye](#). All walleyes measuring less than 15 inches must be immediately released unharmed. This regulation does not apply to the Chariton River below Rathbun dam; the upper limit of the regulation will be the Wayne/Appanoose county line.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Red Haw State Park has partially reopened. Visitors can access the beach and north boat ramp area, but are asked to avoid the campground.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Ada Hayden is usually one of the last lakes in Central Iowa to ice over. Open water fishing should be possible through early December. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use small inline spinners, spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller twister tail jigs, or live bait under a float. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Des Moines River \(Stratford to Saylorville Lake\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: Try slowly retrieving jigs tipped with twister tails, paddle tails, or live baits. Find areas of slow current with depths greater than 3 feet.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Use small inline spinners, spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller twister tail jigs, or live bait under a float. Once ice cover is safe for ice fishing, use jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Terra Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Use small inline spinners, spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller twister tail jigs, or live bait under a float. Once ice cover is safe for ice fishing, use jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Triumph Park West](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Use small inline spinners, spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller twister tail jigs, or live bait under a float. Once ice cover is safe for ice fishing, use jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Ponds and shallow water in Central Iowa have skim ice. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Trout were stocked recently. Look for another stocking in January when ice is safe. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - No Report: Try similar size tackle used for bluegill and crappie; nightcrawlers and minnows are good live bait options.

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Black Crappie - No Report: Prairie Rose has a good population of 10-inch black crappie that will provide good ice fishing this winter.

Most lakes and ponds are open water. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Courtesy docks are in at the main ramp.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes are still ice-free. Many ponds have lost ice after recent warm weather and windy conditions. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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