



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Dec. 8](#)

December Fishing Podcast

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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 3 inches off the boat ramp.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 4 inches off the Ice House Point boat ramp. Conditions are extremely variable; some areas had recently been open and just froze over. Test ice thickness often. Anglers are just starting to venture out in some areas.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Much of the area by the dam and the east ramp is still open. **Any ice is unsafe.** Skim ice has formed along much of the shore, but is unsafe for walking.

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

Ice thickness is from 0-5 inches. Many areas were recently open and have just frozen over with skim ice. Use extreme caution if venturing out anywhere; test ice thickness often.

Ice thickness of area lakes is from 0-5 inches. Conditions are extremely variable; use caution and check ice thickness often. 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 5 inches. Use caution and check ice thickness as you go. 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. **Walleye** - Fair: Use jiggling spoon tipped with bait. Best bite is after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try live bait and jigs near vegetation. Use a bigger bait to avoid the small fish.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 5 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

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 almost entirely iced over with around 4.5 inches in most areas. Use caution when going out; watch for holes that have iced over more recently on the south bay. 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

There is a good amount of ice on the lake for fisherman traveling on foot and some light machines. **Black Crappie** - Excellent. **Bluegill** - Good.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is 4.5 inches. **Walleye** - Good: Use spinners, crankbaits, and long and shallow shad raps.

Spirit Lake

The lake is almost entirely iced over with 5+ inches of ice in most places. Watch for holes that have more recently iced over. The lake is 14 inches below crest. **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

Many of the bays are starting to freeze over, but the majority of the lake is still open. 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 lakes are almost entirely frozen over with good enough ice to walk out on. Larger lakes may have holes that have more recently iced over; use caution when going out. A good amount of snow is forecast in the area which will make reading ice conditions more difficult. Check ice thickness often and bring a friend. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Few anglers are out fishing. Ice thickness is about 5 inches on backwaters. The impoundment is iced over, but thickness varies. Check ice thickness often, especially in areas with current. **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

Streams are in good condition. Hunting seasons are in full swing. Second shotgun deer season opens this Saturday, continuing through Saturday, December 18. When fishing on public areas, be visible to hunters; share the resource. Parking areas on public ground are not plowed. **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 cleaned off gravel; these are trout nests or redds. Use flies or lures imitating small minnows or scuds. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try fishing along grassed edges, undercut banks, pools, and around boulders.

Lake Hendricks

About 5 inches of ice reported with open water by the aerator. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are suspended above bluegill. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Find gills suspended off the bottom near brush piles. Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm.

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. The lake is covered with ice. Ice thickness is about 2 inches thicker along the edges.

Wintry mix through much the of weekend. Temperatures in the mid-30s to upper 20s. Ice thickness varies depending on waterbody. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Walleye - Good: Most anglers are having good success fishing plastics tipped with a minnow.

Manchester District Streams

There has been a lot of activity on area trout streams with the mild weather conditions. **Brown Trout** - Good: Spinnerbaits and streamers work well.

[Maquoketa River \(above Monticello\)](#)

There have been no reports on the Maquoketa River. **Walleye** - No Report: Most anglers are having good success fishing plastics tipped with a minnow.

[Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#)

Walleye - Good: Most anglers are having good success fishing plastics tipped with a minnow.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Tripoli to Troy Mills\)](#)

Walleye - Good: Most anglers are having good success fishing plastics tipped with a minnow.

Interior rivers are in excellent condition, but are starting to freeze over. Walleye fishing has been good to excellent on the rivers. Weather conditions has limited ice production on many lakes and ponds. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Trout streams are in excellent condition. Contact your local area bait shops for the most recent hot spots. For more information, contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

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 33 degrees in the main channel. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam has been fair. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Fair: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is 612.7 feet at Lynxville and is expected to remain steady next week. Water temperature is 35 degrees at the Lynxville dam. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has picked up in the tailwaters of the Lock and Dam. **Sauger** - Good: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - Fair: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is 4.5 feet at Guttenberg and is expected to remain steady. Water temperature is 35 degrees in the channel. **Ice is not safe for ice fishing.** Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has been slow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters with smaller saugers being caught. **Sauger** - Fair: 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. Ice is forming on backwaters, but not considered 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 4.7 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.3 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. Rumors of ice fishing in the backwaters and marinas, but ice thickness is marginal. **Bluegill** - 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** - Fair: 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. The walleye and sauger bite at the Dubuque Pool has been somewhat poor.

Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level is 4.3 feet at Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue and is stable. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. The Bellevue City boat ramp and the DNR ramp are still open; use caution to avoid backing a boat off the ends of the boat ramps with the low river levels. The ramp is slick in the mornings; use caution. Rumors of ice fishing in the backwaters and marinas, but ice thickness is marginal. **Bluegill** - 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. The bite has been up and down, but angling has been good this fall/winter season at the Bellevue Pool.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is 4.4 feet at Fulton, 9.2 feet at Camanche and 4.3 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. Ramps are slick in the mornings; use caution. **Bluegill** - 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 4.2 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. Water levels are stable. 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. Ramps are slick in the mornings; use caution. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 4.12 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been falling slightly the past few days. 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 3.60 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been falling slightly the past few days. Backwaters are frozen over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been hit-or-miss. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Fishing has been hit-or-miss, but some fish are being caught. **Walleye** - Fair: 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 3.45 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been falling slightly the past few days. Backwaters are frozen over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has picked up. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: 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 1.39 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been falling slightly the past few days. 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 have been falling the past few days. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. Backwaters have frozen over with skim ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.** Reports of walleyes and saugers being caught at New Boston and Muscatine. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

A mix of ice and open water. Ice is not thick enough to walk on. **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 lake is frozen over with open water pockets where the geese are keeping it open. Ice is just thick enough to hold geese, not people. **Black Crappie** - No Report: A thin layer of ice has stopped fishing for a while.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The lake is iced over for the most part with a thin layer; don't try to walk on it. The forecast rain could deteriorate ice conditions.

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

Central Park Lake

Most of the lake is skimmed over with ice; geese are keeping one area open.

Coralville Reservoir

Most of the lake has skim ice on it.

Diamond Lake

The lake is mostly skimmed over with ice.

Lake Macbride

Most of the lake has skim ice on it.

Pleasant Creek Lake

Most of the lake has skim ice on it.

Sand Lake

The lake is still ice free. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair.

Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

Most of the river is locked up. A few people are venturing on the ice in the backwaters, but the ice should be considered unsafe.

Most bodies of water are partially to mostly covered in skim ice. **There is no safe ice in the Macbride District.** For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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 903.46 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Water temperatures are around 40 degrees. 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 thin 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 \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

A second trout stocking will occur in January when the ice is safe. Continue to check the fishing report for updates. **Rainbow Trout** - No Report: Try similar size tackle used for bluegill and crappie; nightcrawlers and minnows are good live bait options.

Lake Anita

Lake Anita has a good year class of black crappie averaging 9-inches going into the ice fishing season. Bluegills look good as well, averaging 8-inches.

Littlefield Lake

Littlefield will be a good ice fishing destination this winter. Expect 9-inch black crappie, 8- to 9-inch bluegill and perhaps a bonus yellow perch.

Meadow Lake

Expect to catch 10- to 12-inch black crappies and 8-inch bluegill this winter.

Prairie Rose Lake

Fish surveys show a large number of 10- to 12-inch black crappie. Bluegills will be 8.5- to 9-inches. Prairie Rose will be a good ice fishing destination this winter.

Most lakes and ponds are starting to ice over. **There is no safe ice.** 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 have a thin layer of ice. Boating would require breaking ice. **Ice is too thin for ice fishing.** For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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