



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Dec. 15](#)

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

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

About 50 percent of the lake is open water.

Ice conditions deteriorated this week. Cold temperatures forecast for the weekend should help to build ice in the near future. 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 conditions are unsafe with the warmer temperatures and recent rain. 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 a jigging spoon tipped with bait. Best bite is after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try live bait and jigs near vegetation. Use a bigger bait to avoid the small fish.

[Rice Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Try a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Unsafe ice conditions. Yellow Perch - Slow: 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

Ice thickness is around 6+ inches in most places. **Walleye** - Good: Try spinners, crankbaits, and shallow shad raps. Evening bite is improving as the water cools.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is around 6.5+ inches 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. The best ice is on the south end and Anglers Bay. Marble beach access has many holes and is heaved up along the shoreline. Watch for holes that have more recently iced over. **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. Use caution, areas such as Emerson bay have very spotty ice conditions ranging from 4 inches to open holes spotting the entire area. 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. Many lakes also have a ice/slush layer on top of them due to recent warmer temperatures and rain. 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 (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 conditions have deteriorated with recent rain and snow cover. 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 613.4 feet at Lynxville. Water temperature is 35 degrees at the Lynxville dam. Ice conditions have deteriorated with recent rain and snow cover. 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 5.3 feet at Guttenberg. Water temperature is 35 degrees in the channel. Ice conditions have deteriorated with recent rain and snow cover. 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. **Unsafe ice with recent rains and new snow cover.** 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 5.5 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.2 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. **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. Some limited ice fishing activity; **unsafe ice in nearly all locations.** **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 5.3 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. **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 5.0 feet at Fulton, 10 feet at Camanche and 4.6 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 4.7 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 good on the Mississippi River. Boat ramps are still open. Water levels are rising. 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 5.12 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has is forecast to reach 6.4 feet over the weekend. 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 4.04 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has is forecast to reach 5.4 feet over the weekend. 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 or stickbaits. 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 4.15 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to reach 5.8 feet by early next week. 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. Fishing has been hit-or-miss. **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 1.96 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to reach 2.9 feet early next week. 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 rise over the weekend with recent rains. Reports of walleyes and saugers being caught at New Boston and Muscatine. Backwaters have frozen over with skim ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Lake Macbride

The lake is ice free with the exception of east of the causeway. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Muskellunge** - Fair. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow.

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.

Most lakes in the Macbride District have opened back up from rain, wind, and warm temperatures. 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 903.93 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 mid-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.

[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 thickness 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 thickness 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 thickness 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. Anglers should use patience and caution as more ice forms in the coming week. 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. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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.

Viking Lake

Viking Lake has a good number of 8- to 10-inch black crappie with a smaller percentage of larger fish. Bluegill size will range from 7.5- to 8-inches.

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 are open water. Some small ponds may have a layer of thin ice. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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