



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Dec. 29](#)

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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness was 8 inches near the boat ramp on Dec. 28.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

As of Dec. 28, ice thickness was 8-10 inches off of Ice House Point boat ramp. This is where most of the activity is taking place. There is an open water patch in the east basin of the lake. The aerators in Town Bay are in operation; expect open water and thin ice in this area. Anglers can also fish open water at the fish house in Town Bay; the area directly underneath the structure is kept open with a small water agitator. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers are picking up a few walleye in the area off of Ice House Point and near Gunshot Hill. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness was 8 inches off of the boat ramp on Dec 28.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Most of the lake is iced over, except for a small pocket of open water by the beach on the west side of the lake. Reports of ice thickness at 6 inches in some areas near the north and the south ramps. Much of the ice near the bays and shorelines may be thinner. Ice is quite variable; use caution.

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

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches. Ice thickness is variable and can change quickly. There are areas of open water. Use caution if venturing out; test ice thickness often. **Walleye** - Fair: Best

bite is mornings and evenings. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: The bite is hit-or-miss. Use small jigs tipped with a minnow.

Ice thickness is 6-10 inches on area lakes. Use caution if venturing out; conditions are variable. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

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

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 13 inches. 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. **Black Crappie** - Slow.

Bluegill - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a jigging spoon tipped with live bait in 6 to 8 feet of water. 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 12 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 0 to 12 inches. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Winter aeration systems are running at Clear Lake, Crystal Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake. 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

Ice thickness is around 10+ inches in most areas. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow or tube jig and bobber. **Bluegill** - Good: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-ups are working well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Minnows work well; some sorting may be needed.

Ingham Lake

Use caution; there is an open hole in the lake with the aerator in use.

Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 9+ inches in most places. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Walleye** - Good.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 10.5+ inches. **Black Crappie** - Excellent. **Bluegill** - Good.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is around 9 inches. Use caution; the lake aerator is in use. This creates an open hole on the east side of the lake. **Walleye** - Good: Best bite is at dusk.

Spirit Lake

The lake is entirely iced over with 10+ inches in most places. The best ice is on the south end and Anglers Bay. The north end and Buffalo run are heaved up making access dangerous.

Marble beach access is heaved up at the boat ramp, but a path is clear just north of it. **Walleye** - Good: Best bite is around dusk. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

West Okoboji Lake

Most bays have safe ice for small machines. The bluegill bite in Little Emerson Bay has been very good. Ice thickness is about 8.5 inches at Emerson Bay and about 12 inches at Haywards Bay. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Use tube jigs, plastics, or other small jigs. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

Most lakes have 9+ inches of ice. Larger lakes may have holes that have more recently iced over; use caution when going out, especially if using an ATV or vehicle. Recent weather is slowly melting the surface snow, making most areas wet/slushy; reading ice conditions is 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)

About 7 inches of ice is covering the impoundments. Geese and pelicans are keeping some areas open. Use caution in areas with current. Check ice thickness often. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with minnows; find deeper water with little current. **Walleye** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with a colored spike or waxworm fished near bottom in areas with little current and around structure.

Decorah District Streams

Water clarity is good on most streams. Dirty water from snowmelt improves overnight. Parking areas on public ground are not plowed. Trout anglers using any kind of light weight rods and reels with spinnerbaits or a hook tipped with small piece of crawler, cheese, or dough can be just as successful as fly anglers. **Brook Trout** - Good: Walk around cleared areas in the stream bottom; these are trout nests or "redds". Brook and brown trout eggs won't hatch for a few more months. **Brown Trout** - Good: For brownies slow to take bait, a keen eye and fly box filled with a variety of sizes and colors makes a difference between catching and taking your pole for a walk. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Plenty of fish remain in the stream over winter. Use hair jigs, spinnerbaits, or small shallow water crankbaits for aggressive fish.

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is about 6-8 inches. Use caution around the aerator; geese are keeping this area open. **Black Crappie** - Good: Fish a little above bluegills with similar gear. Crappie tend to strike from below. **Bluegill** - Good: Find fish near the lake bottom. Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Anglers are catching bass when fishing for bluegills.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 4-6 inches. The afternoon bite is best. **Bluegill** - Good: Anglers are catching 3- to 4-inch gills with some nice ones in the mix. Find fish in 10-12 feet of water near the bottom. Use a small brightly colored jig with a waxworm. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: The occasional bass will strike while fishing for bluegills; 10- to 15-inch bass are common.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is about 6-8 inches. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** - Good: Try small jigs tipped

with colored spikes near brush piles.

Temperatures in the 30s to 20s through the weekend. [2023 resident fishing licenses](#) are now available and make great holiday gifts. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Casey Lake \(aka Hickory Hills Lake\)](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig or use a dead stick tipped with a live crappie minnow; try to find structure for best success. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig; try to find structure for best success.

[Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

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

[George Wyth Lake](#)

Anglers are catching panfish. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig or use a dead stick tipped with a live crappie minnow; try to find structure for best success. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig; try to find structure for best success.

[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.

[North Prairie Lake](#)

Anglers are catching trout, bluegill and crappie. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig or use a dead stick tipped with a live crappie minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try jigging flashy jigs. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

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

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

[South Prairie Lake](#)

No reports; decent size bluegill are available. **Bluegill** - No Report: Use a waxworm tipped on an ice fishing jig; try to find structure for best success.

[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 and are starting to lose ice. Walleye fishing has been good to excellent on the rivers when conditions allow. Lakes in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area have been productive for panfish. Weather conditions will begin to deteriorate ice thickness on most water bodies; use extreme caution. 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 8.0 feet at Lansing. Water temperature is 32 degrees in the main channel. Ice is building with an average of 6 to 8 inches. Early ice pan-fishing has been good in deeper

backwater cuts. **Bluegill** - Fair: Ice anglers are doing some sorting for larger gills. Try ice jigs tipped with waxworms. **Sauger** - No report: Try vertical jigging with a minnow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Walleye** - No report: Bottom bounce a jig with twister tails in the Lock and Dam tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Shore Slough near Lansing is producing some perch through the ice in the deeper cuts.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is 614.3 feet at Lynxville. Water temperature is 34 degrees at the Lynxville dam. Ice is building with the colder temperatures. Bussey Lake at Guttenberg has been fair for panfishing at the upper end in the cuts. Use caution around the shorelines. **Bluegill** - Fair: Ice anglers are doing some sorting for the larger gills. Try ice jigs tipped with waxworms. **Northern Pike** - Good: Reports of nice pike near the Greymore area. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm in the vegetation along deeper backwater dredge cuts.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is 5.2 feet at Guttenberg. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the channel. Ice is building in backwaters with 8 inches average. Mud Lake has been fair in the marina area. Avoid thin ice in the creek area leading to Zollicoffers. Panfish have settled into deeper backwaters with zero current. Fishing has been slow in the Lock and Dam tailwaters with smaller saugers being caught. **Bluegill** - Fair: Some up and down reports at Mud Lake and Bertrum Lakes.

Upper Mississippi River levels are stable. Backwaters are building ice with an average of 6 to 8 inches. 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 4.8 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.4 feet at the RR bridge. Water temperature is around 33 degrees; the water is clear. Ramps in the Dubuque area are frozen in; most anglers have turned to ice fishing in the backwater lakes. **Bluegill** - Good: 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. Better ice is bringing out more anglers; reports vary, but there has been some nice catches. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Small yellow perch are being reported with an occasional keeper. Some anglers are using minnows on tip-down rigs.

[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 DNR ramps is frozen over and boat launching is not possible, but the City of Bellevue Ramp is open. **Bluegill** - Good: 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. Expect ice angling to ramp up after this cold spell; ice fishing conditions should greatly improve. **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. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Small yellow perch are being reported with an occasional keeper. Some anglers are using minnows on tip-down rigs.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is 4.6 feet at Fulton, 9.2 feet at Camanche and 4.4 feet at LeClaire. Water

clarity is excellent. Water temperature is near 33 degrees. Boat ramps are iced in. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice fishing is occurring, but no reports were received. Expect anglers to target Rock Creek near Camanche and Sunfish Lake area near Fulton.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is 6.0 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is 33 degrees. **Bluegill** - No Report: Not a lot of ice angling goes on in Pool 15 as true backwater areas are not present in this pool. Some fishing can occur in the marinas and above the dam at LeClaire, but we have received no reports.

Ice fishing is underway in most backwater fishing areas in the district. Many boat ramps are frozen in, but Bellevue City Ramp is open. Other district ramps have significant ice near shore and are not usable. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 6.36 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been falling. As of Dec. 29, the Marquette St boat ramp was frozen in. The main channel was frozen in as well. **Unsafe ice conditions** with the recent warm temperatures.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 4.48 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has been falling the past few days. As of Dec. 29, the boat ramp at Muscatine is frozen in as well as the main channel. **Unsafe ice conditions** with the recent warm temperatures.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 5.20 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been falling the past few days. The main channel is frozen. **Unsafe ice conditions** with the recent warm temperatures.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 2.00 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. We have not received any fishing reports for this pool this week. **Unsafe ice conditions** with the recent warm temperatures.

Tailwater stages have been falling the past few days. The main channel and many of the boat ramps are frozen in. **Unsafe ice conditions** with the recent warm temperatures. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

This weekend the ice was about 7 inches thick. Currently standing water on top of the ice and melting around the edges; more warm weather and rain coming. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers were picking up some crappies just outside the trees headed down towards the dam from the boat ramp.

Crawford Pond

Ice thickness was about 6 inches over the weekend. Ice is covered with a couple of inches of standing water. Quality of the ice is deteriorating with the warm weather. **Bluegill** - Fair:

Anglers were catching bluegills around the brush piles out from the dam and down around the corner out from the pine trees.

Lake Belva Deer

Ice thickness was about 6 inches at the beginning of the week. Currently, the lake has a couple of inches of water on top of the ice and the ice is melting. Use extreme caution when going out. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching some bluegills out from the south ramp (campground). The ice won't be in good shape with the weather as forecast. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching some bluegills out from the south ramp (campground). The ice won't be in good shape with the weather as forecast.

Lake Darling

Ice thickness is 4 inches with two inches of water on it; the first inch of ice is pretty soft. **Bluegill** - Fair: The few anglers that have been are catching some bluegills, but nothing fast and furious.

Lost Grove Lake

Ice thickness was about 6 inches, but will be deteriorating with the warm weather and rain. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are catching bluegill along the trees out from the ends of 230th Avenue. Use caution if you head out, the ice is going to be getting soft.

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

Central Park Lake

Ice thickness is 6-8 inches; fishing was reported as slow during the cold weather.

Coralville Reservoir

Ice thickness is up to 9 inches in protected areas, but the channel has much less. No fishing reports are available.

Diamond Lake

Ice thickness is 4-7 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Most fish being caught are 8- to 9-inches. **Bluegill** – Slow.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Ice thickness was 5-7 inches on most of the lake going into the warm up. Remember, no ice is safe ice. No fishing reports are available.

Lake Macbride

Early in the week ice thickness was 4-8 inches on most of the lake. Use caution; Macbride has variable ice and some poor seams. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing over deeper brush or look for fish suspended 15-25 feet down over open water.

Pleasant Creek Lake

Ice thickness is 4-6 inches on most of the lake, but areas of deeper water could be variable. Fishing is reported as very slow.

Wapsipinicon River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

No ice or fishing reports available; anglers have been out on backwater areas. Use caution if venturing out.

Most lakes in the Macbride District had fishable ice going into Thursday's warm up, No ice should be considered safe ice. Check ice thickness often and to take safety gear every time. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Miami](#)

Little fishing pressure lately. Ice is too thin to support anglers.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Ice thickness is about 1-2 inches in some areas. There is still open water near the dam due to geese keeping an area open.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Ice thickness is about 1 1/2 inches in some spots. There is open water out from the beach area due to geese.

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

Ice is not thick enough to support anglers. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 904.02 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Ice thickness is about 1-2 inches in some areas. There is open water on most of the main lake and around the Bridgeview boat ramp. 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](#)

Ice thickness is not enough to support anglers. Red Haw State Park has partially reopened. Visitors can access the beach and north boat ramp area, but are asked to avoid the campground.

Most area lakes still have some open water; ice conditions are not yet thick enough for anglers. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: 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.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

As of Dec. 28, ice thickness was 7 to 8 inches near shore. There are some ice heaves and weak ice near the West and Williams Drive boat ramps. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try jigging minnows or waxworms on glow jigs over brush piles on the upper half of the lake and along the roadbed out from the Ensign Shelter on the East shore. Best bite is morning and early evening.

Lake Petocka

Rainbow Trout - Fair: 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 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 jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

As of Dec. 28, ponds and lakes in Central Iowa had 6 to 8 inches of ice. Use caution on city ponds that may have then ice around stormwater pipe inlets. 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 is scheduled for January 20th pending safe ice conditions. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: 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.

Greenfield Lake

Greenfield has a large year class of 9-inch black crappie that will provide good ice fishing this winter. **Black Crappie** - Fair.

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. **Bluegill** - Slow: Very few reports; a few anglers are catching fish close to the north boat ramp.

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. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are sorting for 8.5-inch bluegill.

Meadow Lake

Expect to catch 10- to 12-inch black crappies and 8-inch bluegill this winter. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Try fishing late afternoon to catch 10-inch black crappie. **Bluegill** - No Report: Target the cedar tree piles in the lake to catch 8-inch bluegill.

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. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Crappie have been tough to catch during mid-day. Best bite is early morning and late afternoon. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers will have to sort for 9.5-inch bluegill this winter. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: If your fishing a brush pile you will catch an occasional largemouth bass.

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.

Lakes in the district have 7 to 8 inches of ice. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Ice thickness is about 7 inches of ice off the beach boat ramp. Geese are keeping an area of open water off the campground.

[Little River Watershed Lake](#)

Ice thickness is about 7 inches of ice off the main boat ramp. Geese had area of open water along the south end of the lake.

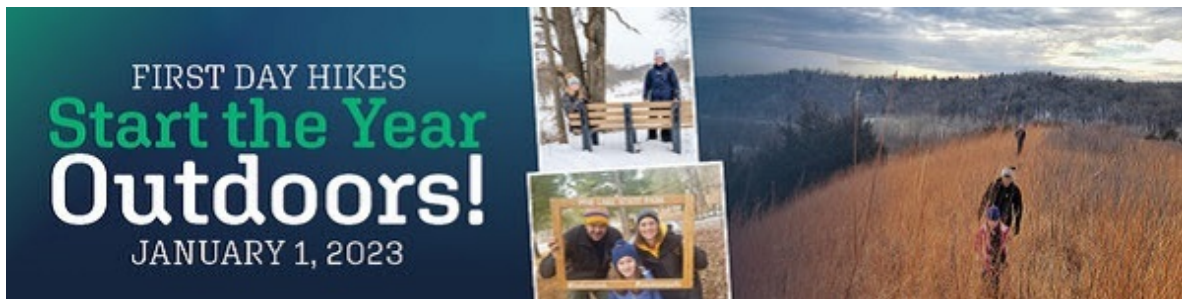
[Three Mile Lake](#)

Ice thickness is about 6 inches of ice off the main boat ramp and 7 inches of ice off the north boat ramp. Geese had area of open water on the south end of the lake.

[Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is about 6 inches of ice off the east boat ramp.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 5-7 inches. Limited ice fishing activity observed this week. Warm weather is forecast through the weekend and could affect ice conditions. Use extreme caution while ice fishing and drill many test holes. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



Visit state parks on your own, or join a [guided hike](#) at several parks and forests. Whichever works for you, check in and take part in the [First Day Hike Challenge](#) through the [State Park Passport!](#)