



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



**MISSOURI AND BIG SIOUX RIVERS
PADDLEFISH FISHING SEASON**

FEB. 1 - APRIL 30



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Feb. 23](#)

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 inches at the boat ramp.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 12-13 inches off of the Ice House Point boat ramp. Ice near the boat ramp has not pulled away from shore. 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: Bigger fish are 10- to 12-inches. Use minnows and waxworms on a jig. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting is needed; fish up to 12-inches are being picked up on waxworms and small minnows fished in 4-6 feet of water between Gunshot Hill and Denison Beach area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness is 7 inches off the boat ramp.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Ice has pulled away from shore in some areas, including the north boat ramp. Reports of anglers still using the south boat ramp to access the ice. Ice thickness ranges from 0-12 inches. Ice around trees, shore, and some areas in the south end of the lake is more variable and thinner. Use caution and check ice thickness often. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are catching crappie in 20-30 feet of water with minnows and spoons. A few fish are also being picked up using waxworms on various colored jigs. **Bluegill** - Fair: Sorting is needed; try fishing near the bottom in 20-30 feet of water with a waxworm or spike. Anglers are having to move a lot to find fish. **Walleye** - Fair.

Moorland Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked recently. Use a small hook or jig tipped with either a minnow, a piece of crawler, or small powerbaits fished under a bobber. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

The thickest ice is about 15 inches. Conditions are variable and can change quickly from one area to another on this lake; check ice thickness often as you move. There are areas of thin ice near the big island, at several seams and some areas near shorelines where the ice has deteriorated. **Walleye** - Slow: Try spoons and minnows along the dredge cuts. Best bite is during low light hours. **White Bass** - Fair. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Lots of smaller fish; keepers are 8- to 9-inches. Try a small jig and waxworm. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Most lakes in the area have 5-14 inches of ice. Ice varies from lake to lake and has deteriorated along shore in some areas; use caution if venturing out. The winter aeration system in Town Bay (westernmost bay) of Black Hawk Lake is in operation. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 18 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: Use a small minnow near vegetation in 6 to 8 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with spikes in 2 to 4 feet of water. Best bite is early morning and near sunset. **Walleye** - Slow: Use a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in 10 to 12 feet of water near vegetation. Best bite is low light periods and after sunset. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Stay mobile to find fish. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try live bait and jigs near vegetation. Use a bigger bait to avoid the small fish.

Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 18 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait near the dredge cut. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with spikes in 3 to 4 feet of water.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 18 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 0 to 18 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms near vegetation. Best bite is early morning and sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

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 20+ inches in most areas. **The walleye season is closed.** **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 are working well; some sorting may be needed.

Five Island Lake

Use caution; the lake aerator has been started up in Town Bay. **Yellow Bass** – Good.

Ingham Lake

Ice thickness is 19+ inches. Use caution; there is an open hole in the lake with the aerator in use. **Walleye** - Fair:

Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 20+ inches in most places. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Walleye** – Good.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 20+ inches. **Black Crappie** - Good. **Bluegill** - Good.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Ice thickness is around 19+ 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 20+ inches in most places. The best ice is on the south end and Anglers Bay. Most accesses are clear of heaves and snow. **The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** -Good. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Use small jigs tipped with a minnow. Sorting may be needed.

West Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is 20+ inches at Emerson Bay and Haywards Bay, and 18+ inches at Triboji. West Okoboji is relatively free of any major heaves or hazards. The bluegill bite in Little Emerson Bay and out from Triboji has been slower as fish have been finicky. **The walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Fair: 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 20+ inches of ice. Most areas have very good ice with continued cold temperatures. Recent wind and snow has created drifts in some areas, making access more difficult. The forecast calls for continued cold temperatures and precipitation. **The walleye season on the Iowa Great Lakes is closed until May 6th. Permanent and non-permanent ice shacks must be removed from the ice when not in use after February 20th.** For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice fishing is not recommended due to rise in water levels. Use caution in areas with current. Check ice thickness often. Conditions can change fast this time of year. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with minnows, spikes and waxies; find deeper water with little current. **Bluegill** - Slow: Find bluegills in backwaters. Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spikes. **Walleye** - Fair: Use small jigs tipped with minnows near evening.

Decorah District Streams

Most area streams are up, but clear. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Use midge, minnow or leech patterns for fish looking to get more bang for their effort. **Brown Trout** - Good: Try fishing around an undercut bank or similar structure. Cloudy days and off-color water are a perfect mix for

catching brown trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Hatchery holdovers remain in the stream teasing anglers. Use small spinnerbaits or hair jigs floating past structure.

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is about 14+ inches. Fish activity is picking up. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try fishing the reefs and around stumps. **Bluegill** - Good: Find gills around rock reefs and drop-offs. Use a spike or waxworm about a foot off the bottom.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is about 12+ inches with a crust of snow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing about 4 to 5 feet off the bottom near dark. **Bluegill** - Fair: Lots of lookers, but some will take a small jig tipped with a spike or waxie. Find fish around brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is about 8-10 inches with about 2 inches of snow on top. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find gills around pallet beds or brush piles. Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike.

A front passes through Wednesday into late Thursday bringing freezing rain and snow. Weekend temperatures warming to the upper 30s. Parking lots on wildlife management areas aren't plowed; use care when parking on roadsides. 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. Recent rains have softened the ice around the edges; avoid crossing areas with current. Anglers are moving often with late afternoon bite better at Shore Slough. **Black Crappie**- Slow: Reports of anglers catching crappie. Try live minnows to entice the bite. **Bluegill** - Slow: Ice anglers are sorting for larger gills. Try ice jigs tipped with waxworms. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Reports of some northern pike active in the backwaters. **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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try Shore Slough near Lansing or Village Creek ramp area to catch perch in the dredge cuts.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 614 feet at Lynxville. The Lynxville boat ramp has been open. The late afternoon bite has been better. Crossing Johnson Slough at Sny Magill is not recommended. Avoid the ramp area at Bussey Lake; enter at the upper end on the island road. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Reports of anglers catching crappie. Try live minnows to entice the bite. **Bluegill** - Slow: Ice anglers are sorting for the larger gills. Try ice jigs tipped with waxworms. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Reports of nice pike near the Greymore area. Try tip-ups in backwater areas; pike will become more active and feeding to prepare for the spring spawn. **Sauger** – Slow. **Walleye** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm in the vegetation along deeper backwater dredge cuts.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level at Guttenberg is falling to near 6.8 feet. The south public boat ramp is free of ice and open. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the channel. Reports of late afternoon bite at Zollicoffers. Avoid thin ice and slush in the creek area. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Reports of anglers catching crappie. Try live minnows to entice the bite. **Bluegill** - Fair: Varied reports at

Mud Lake and Bertrum Lakes. Anglers are moving often and sorting. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Reports of anglers catching northern pike on tip-ups/tip-downs in marina areas. Try tip-ups in backwater areas; pike will become more active and feeding to prepare for the spring spawn. **Sauger** - Fair. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Ice anglers are picking up some nicer perch.

Upper Mississippi River levels are falling slightly. Backwater ice is variable; use caution. The bite has improved this week. 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 receding to 6.4 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.8 feet at the RR bridge. Water temperature is around 33 degrees; the water is clear. Ice fishing is occurring in very select places. Ice conditions are variable and will continue to deteriorate after recent rains; use caution. Hawthorne Ramp is free of ice, but ice flows may persist. **Bluegill** - Good: Only select areas are available for ice fishing as conditions continue to deteriorate. The last ice fishing report was that fish were on the bite with lots of sorting of small fish. **Sauger** - Good: Hawthorne ramp is open, but ice flows may be an issue especially after recent rains and snows. Most anglers are using jigs and minnows. **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 7.0 feet at Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue and is receding. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. The City of Bellevue Ramp is open, but ice flows may occur. Ice fishing has been reported on Pool 13 at very select locations. Ice conditions continue to deteriorate after recent rains and snow. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice is reported as sketchy; some fishing is occurring in select areas. Recent rains and snow may play havoc with ice conditions. 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. If you plan on keeping fish please only keep two fish per child. **Sauger** - Good: The tailwater is open at Bellevue City ramp and the DNR ramp; both can be subject to ice flows. These ice flows have made fishing difficult at times, but conditions have been good this spring. Most anglers are using jigs and minnow rigs or three ways weights with a crankbait. **Walleye** - Good: Reports of many small walleye and an occasional keeper. Better fish have been taken on a three-way crankbait rig.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level at Fulton is 6.8 feet, 10 feet at Camanche, and 5.6 feet at LeClaire. The river is rising throughout the pool. Water clarity is excellent. Water temperature is near 33 degrees. Ice flows were reported at some ramps. **Bluegill** - No Report: Ice is reported as sketchy; use caution. Some fishing is occurring. 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. Recent rains will play havoc with ice conditions. **Sauger** - Good: Reports of small walleye and small sauger with an occasional keeper. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow rig.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is 10.7 feet at Rock Island and is receding. 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; we have received no reports. The ice is in poor condition.

Ice fishing is winding down, but still taking place in select areas. The river is receding; most district ramps are ice free, but ice flows may be periodically present near ramps. If you have angling questions, please call the Bellevue Fisheries Management Station at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 8.18 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has risen close to a foot the past few days. Tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers has been slow with the muddier water conditions. **Unsafe ice conditions** with recent rains, warmer weather and rising river levels. **Sauger** - Slow: Some sauger were being caught below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough before the rain. Try vertical jigging with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Some walleyes were being caught below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough before the rain. Try vertical jigging with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 6.63 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to reach 6.9 feet by the weekend. The boat ramps at Muscatine are open. **Unsafe ice conditions** with recent heavy rains, warmer weather and rising river levels. **Sauger** - Slow: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling stickbaits. **Walleye** - Slow: Look for walleyes below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling stickbaits.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 8.30 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has risen close to 2 feet since last weekend. The Toolsboro ramp is open, but the road is starting to get muddy. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has slowed with the rise in water levels. **Unsafe ice conditions**. **Sauger** - Slow: Fishing for saugers below the dam has been slow. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling stickbaits. **Walleye** - Slow: Fishing for walleyes has been slow. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling stickbaits.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 5.17 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is forecast to reach 5.6 feet over the weekend. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports or ramp condition reports for this pool this week. **Unsafe ice conditions** with recent heavy rains, warmer weather and rising river levels.

Tailwater stages have risen 1-2 feet this past week. Boat ramps are opening back up with the warmer weather. Ramp conditions may change with snow in the forecast. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers, but fishing has slowed down with recent rains and rise in river levels. Main channel water clarity has been fair. Water temperature is 34-36 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions**. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Unsafe conditions; ice fishing is not recommended. Mostly open water.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe conditions; ice fishing is not recommended. Areas of open water.

[Lake Darling](#)

Unsafe conditions; ice fishing is not recommended. The only ice left on the lake is on the campground arm of the lake.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Unsafe conditions; ice fishing is not recommended. The near shore ice is gone or rotten. Areas of open water are starting to develop.

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

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

Unsafe ice; current seams and shorelines are opening up.

[Diamond Lake](#)

Unsafe ice

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

Unsafe ice

[Lake Macbride](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Shorelines are weak or open; there are open holes and seams on the lake. East of the causeway is also opening up.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Shorelines are weak or open; there are open holes and seams on the lake.

[Rodgers Park Lake](#)

Unsafe ice

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice thickness is up to 9 inches; edges are soft or open and the main ice is deteriorating. The aeration unit is on; there is open water at the south end of the lake. Use caution if venturing out.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

Dam removal has started at Central City; water levels above the dam may begin to fall. Public access below the dam is not permitted during the project.

Ice conditions in most of the Macbride District are unsafe. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Corydon Reservoir](#)

Ice thickness is not enough to support anglers.

Hawthorn Lake

Ice thickness is not enough to support anglers.

Lake Miami

Ice thickness is variable and inconsistent across the lake and is not enough to support anglers.

Lake Miss (Tug Fork West)

Thin ice is present, as well as open water.

Lake Sugema

The lake is at least 50% open water. Ice thickness is variable in the other areas and is not enough to support anglers.

Lake Wapello

The lake was open water recently; ice thickness is not enough to support anglers.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.44 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Ice thickness varies across the lake. There is open water in the main lake and around Bridgeview. There has been very little fishing pressure due to ice variability; the current ice thickness is not enough to support anglers. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Walleye** - No Report: There is a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye at Lake Rathbun. This was effective January 1st. All walleyes measuring less than 15-inches must be immediately released unharmed.

Red Haw Lake

Ice thickness is not enough to support anglers. Visitors are asked to avoid the campground area.

Most area lakes have thin ice or open water; ice thickness varies across each lake. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

Big Creek Lake

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. Some of the edges at access points are weak. There is an open seam of water just south of the Williams Drive ramp that could be thin ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: 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 in the morning and early evening.

Don Williams Lake

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. There was some weak ice at the edge of the boat ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use waxworms on glow jigs over pallets and brush piles on the lower half of the lake.

Ice conditions are variable in Central Iowa with some lakes having 9+ inches of ice and others having partially open spots. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Lake Anita](#)

No Report

[Littlefield Lake](#)

No Report

[Meadow Lake](#)

No Report

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

No Report

Ice fishing is not recommended in the district. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Open water continues to expand.

Open water continues to expand on Mount Ayr district lakes. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

