



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Dec. 28](#)

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is open. Skim ice will likely form throughout the coming week. The area around the fish house in Town bay is kept ice-free with a water agitator to provide open water fishing opportunities. **Black Crappie** - Fair: There is open water at the fish house in Town Bay; use a small jig. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig or a piece of crawler under a bobber.in the fish house in Town Bay.

[Blue Lake](#)

Aerators are in operation off-shore near the park visitor center for the winter season; expect open water and thin ice in this area when the lake starts to freeze over.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Courtesy docks are removed for the season.

[North Twin Lake](#)

The lake has been mostly ice-free. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

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

Storm Lake has been partially ice-covered. Any remaining ice is unsafe.

Most lakes in the area are completely open. With temperatures falling, expect ice to slowly build but still be too thin to walk on throughout this coming week. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Clear Lake is completely ice-free. Any newly formed ice will be very thin without colder temperatures.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Crystal Lake is mostly ice-free. Winter aeration system is operating.

[Rice Lake](#)

Rice Lake is completely ice-free.

[Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

Silver Lake is mostly ice-free. Winter aeration system is operating.

Most all of the northcentral Iowa lakes are ice-free. 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 has started to form ice again. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small hook and piece of worm. In deeper water, use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting will most likely be needed.

Ingham Lake

The lake is mostly open. Lots of waterfowl are residing at the lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

Lost Island Lake

The lake is essentially ice-free. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful fishing from shorelines in the evenings.

Minnewashta Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Try slowly trolling over vegetation with minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Good.

Scharnberg Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Black Bullhead - Good. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the walleye bite to improve with falling water temperatures.

Spirit Lake

The lake is essentially ice-free. **Black Crappie** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. Many nice-sized fish have been seen lately. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small hook and a small piece of worm. In deeper water, use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Walleye** - Good: Minnows work well. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Find good numbers; may need to sort for size.

West Okoboji Lake

The lake is essentially ice-free. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Pumpkinseed** - Good: **Walleye** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting may be needed.

Most area water levels are a few inches below crest. Most larger lakes are almost completely open. Warmer weather and rain showers has knocked back any ice that has been made. Expect ice to start building this weekend as high temperatures will be at or below freezing. Some bays have thicker ice, but ice fishing access can be hard to find. Check ice thickness often if you attempt to go out on the water. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Brinker Lake

Reports of anglers taking some nice crappie. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a live minnow on a jig or plain hook in 30 to 40 feet of water near or on top of structure.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers are catching walleye on the Cedar River in Black Hawk County. **Walleye** - Slow: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

The walleye bite has vastly slowed on the Shell Rock River in Butler County. **Walleye** - Slow: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics. Evening fishing is best.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

The walleye bite has vastly slowed on the Wapsipinicon River in Buchanan County. **Walleye** - Slow: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics.

Interior river levels remain low. Angling reports have been slow to poor this past week. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. For further information contact your local bait shops for the most recent information. Contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.1 feet at Lansing and is expected to rise slightly. Water temperature is near 39 degrees. Lansing Village Creek ramp has been blocked with thin ice, but

some have been breaking ice to get out. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows under a slipper bobber around wood structure of backwater sloughs. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger have started to move up to the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with a minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. 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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is 613.6 feet at Lynxville and is predicted to rise slightly. Water temperature is 41 degrees at Lock & Dam 9-Lynxville. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows under a slipper bobber around wood structure of backwater sloughs. **Sauger** - Slow: Sauger have moved into deep water at the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or a minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. 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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is 5.3 feet below Lock & Dam 10-Guttenberg and is rising slightly. Water temperature is 41 degrees. Repairs on the city ramp in Guttenberg have been completed; the ramp is **open**. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows under a slipper bobber around wood structure of backwater sloughs. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger have moved into deep water at the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Fair: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. 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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

Upper Mississippi River levels remain low. A slight rise in levels is expected with recent rain. Water temperatures hover into the 40s. The bite has slowed with the colder temperatures. Panfish have moved into backwater lakes for winter. Skim ice is forming on backwaters, but is not thick enough for ice fishing. Walleye/sauger fishing remains slower; reports of better catches. Live bait works best. **NOTICE:** Guttenberg ramp is **open**.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The river is rising at Dubuque to near 5.2 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.9 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 37 degrees. Water clarity is good. Some icing has occurred; ramps remain open and warmer weather is expected. **Sauger** - Fair: Lots of small fish; many anglers are using one eye jigging spoons. **Walleye** - Slow: Most anglers are targeting the tailwaters with jigging spoons or jig and minnow rigs. Not much is being reported, but conditions are good. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Nice 12-inch plus perch were being reported all fall from backwater areas and shallower water in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

The water level is rising to near 4.7 feet at Lock and Dam 13 . Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 38 degrees. Water levels are low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps will become an issue again. Use the minimum amount of ramp necessary to launch your boat. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappie fishing was decent this fall. With the ice transition, we haven't received any reports on crappies for the past few weeks. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The kids trout pond north of the DNR fisheries station is stocked with trout and can provide fun action for kids throughout the winter. If you plan to keep trout, limit yourself to 2 trout per child so we can keep good fishing in the pond throughout the winter. **Sauger** - Fair: The bite is inconsistent with some anglers doing well and others poorly. Lots of small fish being reported. Most anglers are using one-eye jigging spoons or a jig and minnow rig. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleye are being caught on jig and minnow rigs and jigging spoons in the tailwaters. Both the City boat ramp and the DNR boat ramp are open. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Healthy 9-inch yellow perch were reported along vegetation lines and brush piles all fall.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is rising at Fulton to near 4.7 feet, 9.5 feet at Camanche and near 4.5 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 38 degrees. Water levels may get low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps may become an issue again. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappie fishing was decent this fall. With the ice transition, we haven't received any reports on crappies for the past few weeks. **Sauger** - Fair: Some smaller sauger were reported; inconsistent bite with some anglers doing well and others have troubles catching fish. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow rig. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleyes have moved toward the tailwaters and upstream wing-dams. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow combination. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Some yellow perch are being caught with red worms along exposed vegetation lines. Lots of small fish with an occasional keeper. Nice ring perch were taken out of the tailwater in about 10 feet of water.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is stable and near 4.6 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 38 degrees. Water levels may get low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps may become an issue again. **Sauger** - Slow: Expect some angling to take place in the tailwater with anglers mainly using jig and minnow rigs. Water levels are low and rising. Water temperatures are around 38 degrees. Low levels elevate concern about backing off the back of ramps; use the minimum amount of ramp necessary to launch your boat. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 5.70 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 7.3 feet by the middle of next week. Backwaters are starting to ice-over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Fair: There has been some sauger fishing in Sylvan Slough and below the Lock and Dam. Try jigs and minnows or jigs and crawlers.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.24 feet at Lock and Dam 16 at Muscatine and has been

rising. The docks are still in the water at Muscatine; there has been some tailwater fishing. Backwaters are starting to ice-up. Big Timber has some skim ice with areas of open water. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Fair: Reports of saugers being caught below the Lock and Dam on jigs and crawlers; mostly smaller fish with keeper-sized fish mixed in.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 4.16 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 6.4 feet by the middle of next week. Backwaters are starting to ice-up. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Slow: There has been some tailwater fishing for saugers below the dam; fishing has slowed. Try jigs and crawlers or minnows. Mostly smaller fish with keeper-sized fish mixed in.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 1.84 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is rising. Tailwater stage is forecast to reach 3.0 feet by the middle of next week. We have not received any fishing reports for this pool this week. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or crawlers. Trolling three-way rigs with minnows can work, too.

Tailwater stages have been rising the past few days and are forecast to keep rising. Main channel water temperature is around 40 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. Backwaters are starting to ice-up. **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

The lake is ice-free. No fishing activity to report.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

The lake is ice-free; ice could form quickly with the next cold front. Use caution around the water; watch for black ice on the concrete and rocks, especially in the mornings with a little wind.

[Lake Darling](#)

The lake is ice-free. Use caution if you use the boat ramps; the air temperature is at the level where splashing water is freezing on the concrete of the ramp. The docks have been pulled for the winter.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The lake is mostly wide open. You might find some skim ice up in the bays in the mornings.

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

[Central Park Lake](#)

The lake is all open.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake is all open.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The skim ice comes and goes, but the lake is all open.

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

The lake is all open.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

The lake is all open. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with worms next to submerged brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with worms next to submerged brush piles.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake is all open. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows over brush piles in 15-20 feet of water. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use slow moving baits on rock

edges. **Muskellunge** - Slow. **Walleye** - Slow: Some fish are on rock reefs and others are on deeper points. Try jigs with plastics or minnows. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still empty due to the renovation project; the project is complete and the lake will fill as mother nature allows.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The water temperatures are in the upper 30s. The docks were pulled this week. The modern bathroom and fish cleaning station are closed for the season. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing minnows over brush piles. **Muskellunge** - Slow: **Walleye** - Slow: Use jigs or live bait along rock in 10-20 feet of water.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Last week the lake was skimmed over; currently it is all open. The water is very clear.

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

The river is mostly open. The ramp at Pinicon Ridge is open. A dredging project in the Pinicon Ridge backwaters will affect ice fishing this winter.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Very little fishing pressure reported this past week.

[Lake Miami](#)

Very little fishing activity.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Very little fishing activity. Skim ice is forming on cold nights around the shoreline and in the coves.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Very little fishing activity. Skim ice is forming around the shorelines and in the bays

during the cold nights.

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

Skim ice is forming around the shorelines on the colder nights. Trout were stocked recently. Try a small tube, in-line spinners, or a piece of nightcrawler. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 902.37 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. 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. All walleyes measuring less than 15 inches must be immediately released unharmed.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Park visitors are asked to avoid the campground area due to the continued storm damage cleanup. Very little fishing activity has been reported.

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

SOUTHWEST

[Atlantic Quarry Pond 1](#)

The lake has open water. Trout were stocked for a second time on Dec. 6th. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Watch for trout to break the surface of the water and move to that location and cast to them. Try similar tackle used for crappies like small spinners, spoons, twister tails and minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Orient Lake](#)

Orient has a good fish population and should provide quality ice fishing this winter. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Orient has good numbers of 9- to 10-inch fish. **Bluegill** - No Report: Bluegills are 8- to 9-inches and in good body condition.

For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

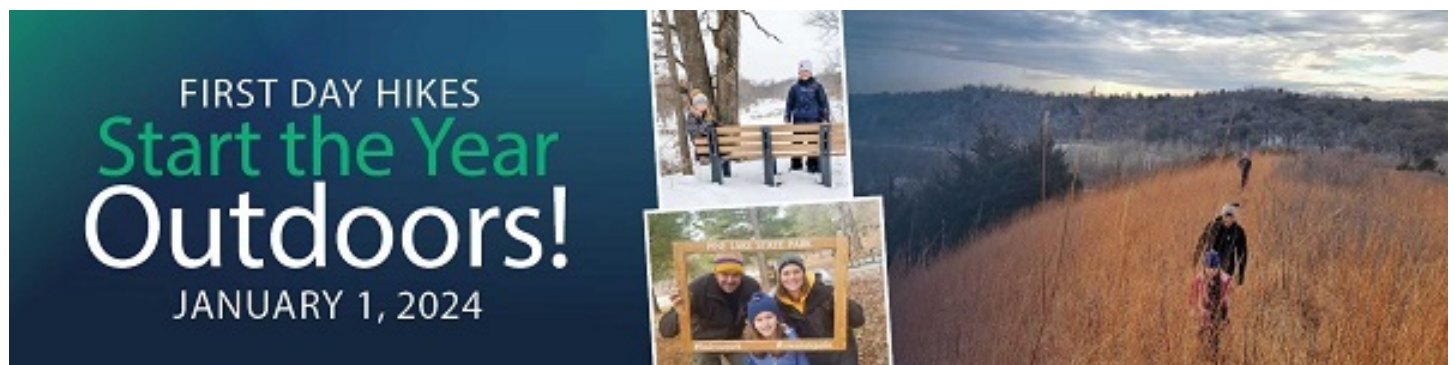
[Three Mile Lake](#)

Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool. The lake will be up to 8 feet below normal pool for the rest of 2023.

[West Lake \(Osceola\)](#)

Main boat ramps are closed due to low water conditions.

Large lakes are open; some skim ice on smaller lakes, especially in the mornings. Water temperature in most Mount Ayr district lakes is in the upper 30s to low 40s. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



What are your plans for New Year's Day 2024? Iowa state parks and forests invite you to enjoy the outdoors and take a hike! Visit state parks on your own, or join a **guided hike** at several parks and forests.

Hikers can expect to be surrounded by the quiet beauty of nature in winter, and experience spectacular views, beautiful settings and the cultural treasures offered by Iowa's state parks.

Find a [First Day Hike](#) near you!
