



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

**DON'T
BREAK
THE ICE**

NO ICE IS
100% SAFE

**AVOID OFF
COLORED
SNOW OR ICE**

ICE SHOULD BE AT LEAST...
4 INCHES 
THICK FOR FISHING
& **5 INCHES**
 **THICK FOR
SNOWMOBILES**



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Jan. 11](#)

January Fishing Podcast

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice conditions are thin and variable. It is difficult to see the variability with the snow cover; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice conditions are variable and difficult to see due to snow cover. Ice thickness near the Ice House Point boat ramp is 3 inches, with several inches of snow cover. **Ice fishing is not recommended**. 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.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice is too thin and variable; **unsafe ice conditions**.

[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.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

[North Twin Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

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

Ice conditions are variable. The variability is difficult to see with the recent snow cover. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches in the district. The ice variability is difficult to see with snow cover. **Unsafe ice conditions on many lakes.** For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is postponing the trout stocking scheduled for this Saturday, Jan. 13 due to unsafe ice conditions. The family fishing event also scheduled for this Saturday has been canceled and will not be rescheduled.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice thickness varies greatly. Ice conditions should improve with colder temperatures forecast for the next several days. Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. No more than one walleye longer than 22-inches may be taken per day.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice thickness varies greatly. Winter aeration system is operating.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice thickness varies greatly. Winter aeration system is operating.

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

Ice fishing is not recommended. Ice thickness varies greatly. Winter aeration system is operating.

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 fully ice covered, but be weary of holes that have closed up more recently. Ice thickness is 4 inches or less in most areas. **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 ice covered. Ice thickness is around 5 inches. Lots of waterfowl are residing on an open hole on the lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 5 inches. There is a large open hole in the center of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful fishing from shorelines in the evenings.

Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 4 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try slowly trolling over vegetation with minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Good.

Scharnberg Pond

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

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The lake is fully ice covered, but still has relatively thin ice. Average ice thickness is 3 inches. **Black Bullhead** - Good. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the walleye bite to improve with falling water temperatures.

Spirit Lake

The lake is fully ice covered, but only the northeast bay and closer up shore has ok ice. Ice thickness is 5 inches or less in most areas. **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

Large portions of the the lake are ice covered. Only a few bays have safe ice for for travel; use caution. **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.

Ice thickness is 5 inches or less on most area lakes. Current temperatures are below freezing and should continue to get colder over the next week. Expect ice conditions to improve each day. The largest lakes have been the last to freeze. Bays and smaller lakes are best for safe ice fishing access. Check ice thickness

frequently; there are many open areas that have frozen more recently. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

[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. Anglers are picking up a few walleye. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** 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 7.9 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable. Water temperature is near 33 degrees. Lansing Village Creek ramp has been blocked with thin ice, but some have been breaking ice to get out. Some ice fishing on Shore Slough is producing panfish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try minnows under a slipper bobber around wood structure of backwater sloughs. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger are in the deeper water in the tailwater of the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with a minnow rig. **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 at the lower ends of backwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is stable at 614 feet at Lynxville. Water temperature is 36.5 degrees at Lock & Dam 9-Lynxville. Ice conditions should improve with the colder temperatures this week. **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 stable at 5.7 feet below Lock & Dam 10-Guttenberg. Water temperature is 35 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 are in the deeper water in the tailwater of the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with a minnow rig. **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 are falling this week. Water temperature is falling with frigid temperatures. The bite has slowed; fish are not as active in colder temperatures. Look for panfish in the upper end of backwaters in early winter. Thin ice is forming on backwaters; **ice fishing is not recommended**. 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 receding at Dubuque to near 5.8 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.4 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. **No safe ice fishing reported**. **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 receding to near 6.0 feet at Lock and Dam 13. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. **No safe ice fishing has been reported. 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 receding at Fulton to near 5.6 feet, 10.0 feet at Camanche and near 5.0 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 34 degrees. **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 receding to near 6.3 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 34 degrees. **Sauger** - Slow: Expect some angling to take place in the tailwater; anglers mainly using jig and minnow rigs.

Water levels are receding. Water temperatures are around 34 degrees. **No safe ice fishing in the district.** If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Large parts of the lake are ice-free. Skim ice is forming in the bays. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Lake Belva Deer

Mostly open water earlier this week. Colder weather last night (Jan. 10) formed some skim ice just in time to collect snow from the next storm.

Lake Darling

The lake was wide open on Jan. 10 with only a couple of small patches of skim ice. There are now bigger areas of ice, but much of the lake is ice-free. The ramps are covered with 11 + inches of snow.

Lost Grove Lake

Some skim ice in areas of the lake protected from the wind. Forecast snow will make it harder for cold air temperatures to make more ice towards the end of the week.

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 partially skimmed over.

Coralville Reservoir

The lake is partially skimmed over.

Diamond Lake

The lake is partially skimmed over.

Green Castle Lake

The lake is partially skimmed over.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

The lake is 75 percent skimmed over; geese are keeping some of it open.

Lake Macbride

The lake is 50 percent open.

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 coves are skimmed over, but the main lake is open. Docks have been removed for the season. The water is very clear.

[Sand Lake](#)

The lake is partially skimmed over.

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

A dredging project in the Pinicon Ridge backwaters will affect ice fishing this winter.

Some lakes have skim ice, some are open. 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 this fall. 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 902.47 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

Big Creek Lake

Big Creek Lake is mostly open water with some thin ice in shallow areas.

Most small ponds in Central Iowa have some thin ice. Larger ponds and lakes are mostly open water with some skin ice. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** For information on central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Atlantic Quarry Pond 1

Half the lake has open water. **Rainbow Trout** - No Report: 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.

Lake Anita

Ice conditions range from 1.5 inches to open water. Geese are keeping an area of water open in the north arm by the roadbed.

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.

Prairie Rose Lake

Ice thickness is 2 inches. Geese are keeping a portion of the lake open. Check the fishing report weekly for ice conditions.

Ice conditions range from 2 inches to open water. **There is no safe ice in the southwest district.** 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.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 0 to 2 inches. Large lakes have large areas of open water; smaller lakes have some pockets of open water. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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Promo Code: Cabin2024

Are you ready for a cozy getaway in an Iowa State Park cabin? Get 20% off your stay with Promo Code **Cabin2024** when you [book now](#) for the months of **January or February 2024**. Enjoy the pristine beauty and outdoor fun of winter in an Iowa state park.

This promo applies to the year-round cabins at:

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- [Pine Lake State Park](#) (4 cabins, max occupancy from 4 to 6)
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- [Union Grove State Park](#) (2 cabins, max occupancy 4)
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Promo code only can be applied for [online reservations](#) for January 1 through February 29, 2024. Promo code is good only for the state parks listed. Two-night

minimum. Last day to make a reservations is February 21, 2024. Rules and fees apply.