



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. 18](#)

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

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 7 inches near the ramp. Conditions are variable; use caution and check thickness often if venturing out.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 inches near the Ice House Point boat ramp, with several inches of snow cover. Conditions are variable; use caution. 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.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches.

[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](#)

Reports of ice thickness up to 4 inches in some places; highly variable conditions.

[North Twin Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 7 inches near the south boat ramp.

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

Ice thickness varies from 0 to 10 inches. The ice thickness variability is difficult to see with the recent snow cover. Use caution and check ice thickness often.

Ice thickness is 0 to 10 inches in the district. The ice variability is difficult to see with snow cover. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 10 inches. 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. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm. You may have to switch to bigger tackle to avoid the small fish.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 10 inches. The winter aeration system is operating.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 10 inches. The winter aeration system is operating. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait near the edge of vegetation.

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

Ice thickness is 7 to 10 inches. The winter aeration system is operating. **Bluegill** -

Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait in 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 fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 12 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 completely ice covered. Ice thickness is 10-12 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

[Lost Island Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 12 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful fishing from shorelines in the evenings.

[Minnewashta Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10-12 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. Ice thickness averages 12 inches. **Black Bullhead** - Good. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the walleye bite to improve with falling water temperatures.

[Spirit Lake](#)

The lake is fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 10-12 inches in most areas. Be aware of large heaves. **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 fully iced up. West Okoboji is one of the last lakes to completely ice up; it has some of the thinner ice in the area. Foot traffic and small ATV use should be possible in most areas. 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.

All area lakes are completely ice covered. Area ice thickness range from 8-12 inches. Ice conditions should continue to improve with continued below freezing temperatures. The largest lakes have been the last to freeze. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice thickness is 8 to 11 inches with thinner under the snow. Use caution when crossing areas with current; check ice thickness often. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm under a bobber.

Decorah District Streams

Water clarity is excellent, but flows remain low. Parking areas on public ground are not plowed; use caution when parking along roads. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Use small midge scud or egg patterns in the pools or ends of runs. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Try fishing around undercut banks or similar structure. Cloudy days and off-color water are a perfect mix for catching this trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Spawn is on. Hatchery holdovers remain in the stream teasing anglers. Use small spinner baits or hair jigs drifting through a hole.

Lake Hendricks

Snow drifts around edge of lake. Use caution on ice; ice thickness is about 6 inches. Open water around the aerator; stay away from this area. Few anglers are out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow in drop-offs or around structure. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jig tipped with waxworm around structures.

Lake Meyer

Use caution on ice; ice thickness is 3 to 6 inches. Few anglers are out.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness was about an inch before last week's 20 inch snow. Ice fishing is not recommended due to slowed ice formation.

Temperatures are warming through the weekend with highs above 0 and lows below. Ice formation is slow on many lakes due to snow cover. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

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

George Wyth Lake

Reports of 5 inches of good ice; use extreme caution when venturing out. Anglers are catching a few bluegill. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small ice jig tipped with a waxworm fished off the bottom or near structure; some sorting may be needed.

Interior rivers are frozen over with the recent arctic blast. Warming temperatures are in the extended forecast. Ice reports are sketchy; use extreme caution when venturing out. Trout streams remain in excellent condition with some shelf ice. 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. Ice thickness is near 7-8 inches. Lansing Village Creek ramp has iced in. Ice fishing on Shore Slough has been productive with lots of sorting bluegills. Avoid ice in areas of current. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is stable at near 614 feet at Lynxville. Water temperature is 34 degrees at Lock & Dam 9-Lynxville. Backwaters have formed 6- 7 inches of ice. **Unsafe ice conditions in areas with current.** Enter Bussey Lake from the upper end causeway. **Unsafe ice conditions near the parking lot and ramp.** **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is 5.1 feet at Lock & Dam 10-Guttenberg. Water temperature is 35 degrees. Guttenberg boat ramp has iced in. Ice anglers are walking to Zollicoffers at Mud Lake to pick up bluegills. Ice thickness is near 7 inches. Avoid the thin ice near the creek outflow. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Good: Tip a small ice jig with a waxworm and jig through the ice just off the bottom of deeper cuts. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen slightly. The river has iced over with temperatures near 32 degrees. Boat ramps are iced in. Backwaters have around 6-7 inches of ice; **ice fishing is not recommended in areas with current.** Panfish will be in the deep cuts of backwaters. Avoid ice in areas of heavy snow and current.

Mississippi River Pool 12

The river is stable at Dubuque at near 5.3 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.9 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 32 degrees. Water clarity is good. Ice fishing is being reported in many areas, especially in marinas and safe to enter spots. Ice quality varies from poor and slushy to up to 7 inches on wind-swept open ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being reported with bluegills in marina areas. **Bluegill** - Good: Small bluegills are being reported out of the harbor areas on teardrop type lures and waxworms. **Sauger** - No Report: Dubuque ramps are iced in making boating access impossible. **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 steady at near 5.a feet at Lock and Dam 13. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 32 degrees. Reported ice thickness varies from poor and slushy to up to 4 inches on wind-swept open ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappie are incidentally being caught with bluegills on waxworms. **Bluegill** - Good: Small gills are being reported with a lot of sorting needed to get cleaners. Most anglers are using a tear drop lure with waxworms. Reported ice quality varies; use caution. **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. **Walleye** - No Report: Boat ramps are frozen in with no boat access possible. **Yellow Perch** - No Report: Healthy 9-inch yellow perch were reported along vegetation lines and brush piles all fall. Expect some to be caught this ice fishing season.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is steady at near 4.9 feet Fulton, 9.5 feet at Camanche and near 3.3 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 32 degrees. **Bluegill** - No Report: Expecting to hear of some ice fishing at Sunfish and Rock creek, but have not had any reports so far. **Walleye** - No Report: Boat ramps are frozen in.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is steady at near 5.2 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 32 degrees. **Bluegill** - No Report: We get very few reports on

ice fishing in pool 15 as the pool contains very few backwater areas that are essential for panfish.

The first major ice fishing reports are filtering in from the district. Ice quality reports vary from poor slushy ice to ice up to 7 inches. Use caution in snow covered areas as they might not have frozen despite the cold temperatures; avoid discolored ice. Water levels are stable throughout the district. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is fairly steady at 5.51 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. The main channel is frozen up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is fairly steady at 3.97 feet at Lock and Dam 16 at Muscatine. The main channel has frozen up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is fairly steady at 3.92 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. The main channel is frozen up. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 1.56 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. We have not received any fishing or ice condition reports for this pool.

The main channel has frozen up with the recent cold weather. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool yet. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Belva Deer

Unsafe ice conditions. Very little to no clear ice; mostly snow/slush that froze into ice.

Lake Darling

Unsafe ice conditions. Very weak layer of ice; difficult to judge ice thickness.

Lost Grove Lake

Unsafe ice conditions. The west end below the Causeway had a couple inches of clear ice before the last snow storm; you no longer can tell where that ended and the newer weak snow-slush-ice froze up to cover the rest of the lake.

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

Central Park Lake

The lake just froze over Sunday; ice is just forming. Use caution if venturing out.

Coralville Reservoir

The lake is ice covered, but a lot of snow is insulating it. Ice conditions are extremely variable.

Green Castle Lake

Ice anglers have been out; ice conditions are unknown. Use caution if venturing out.

Hannen Lake

Ice thickness is 5-6 inches on most of the lake. The Jan. 20 ice fishing tournament has been cancelled due to sub-zero temperatures.

Lake Macbride

Ice thickness is 3-7 inches depending on when it froze and how much snow is on it.

Anglers have been out in areas; check ice thickness often if venturing out.

[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](#)

Ice thickness is 3-7 inches depending on when it froze and how much snow is on it. Anglers have been out in areas; check ice thickness often if venturing out.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice conditions are unknown. The aeration system is not on yet, but will be in the next week or two which will open up the south end of the lake. Use caution if venturing out.

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

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

Most lakes are all frozen over, but the snow on top has caused uneven ice formation. Check ice thickness often. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Very little fishing pressure reported. Check ice thickness often.

[Lake Miami](#)

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often.

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

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often. The current lake level is 902.43 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.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Very little fishing activity. Check ice thickness often.

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 completely ice covered with an average ice thickness of 6 inches.

[Hickory Grove Lake](#)

Ice anglers have been on the lake. Parts of the lake froze at different times. Check ice thickness often, especially on the lower end near the island. **Bluegill** - Fair: The bluegill fishery has grown well and should be attractive to ice anglers. Habitat is abundant; it will take some exploring to find the areas the fish prefer. Find habitat locations on the [DNR Fishing Atlas](#).

[Lake Petocka](#)

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

[Terra Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 6 inches. Ice fishing is occurring; use caution on the SE corner where it was last to freeze up. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try panfish jigs or jigging spoons tipped with one or multiple waxworms. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Triumph Park West

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

Ice thickness is 4-8 inches on most ponds and lakes in Central Iowa. Ice conditions are variable due to snow cover; some lakes just started to make ice in the past week. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Farm Creek Lake (a.k.a. Young's Pond)

Ice thickness is 8 inches. The lake should provide decent fishing this winter. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Black crappie average 9-inches. **Bluegill** - No Report: Sort for 8-inch bluegills.

Greenfield Lake

Greenfield has a good population of 10-inch black crappie.

Lake Anita

Ice thickness is 5 to 9 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: One angler reported catching crappies just before dark close to the fish cleaning station. **Bluegill** - Fair: Most of the fishing is taking place below the campground in the north arm of the lake.

Orient Lake

Ice thickness is 10 inches. **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 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - No Report: There are fewer 10- to 12-inch black crappies this winter. **Bluegill** - Slow: Find cedar tree piles for best success. Fish will average 8.5-inches.

Viking Lake

Ice thickness is 8 inches.

Ice thickness is 8 to 12 inches in the district. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches off the main boat ramp near the beach area. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles.

[Summit Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 inches off the boat ramp; there are areas of thin ice near the HWY 25 bridge. No report on fishing.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches off the main boat ramp. Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool.

[Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 8 inches off the main boat ramp. No Report on fishing.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 4 to 8 inches. Some lakes had areas of open water earlier in the week. Heavy snow cover on some areas of the lakes will affect ice thickness. If you decide to go fishing, use extreme caution and check ice thickness often. Limited ice fishing activity observed this week. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



**UPGRADE
YOUR
LICENSE
TO A
DURABLE
CARD**