



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. 8](#)

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

## **NORTHWEST**

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Aerators are in operation in Town Bay. There is open water around the fish house in Town Bay and under the inlet bridge.

### [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. Bluegill – Fair. Yellow Perch – Fair.**

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

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

Ice fishing is not recommended in the district. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Blue Pit

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### Clear Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** Ice conditions continue to deteriorate. Wear safety gear and check ice thickness as you go if you venture out. 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. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with bait near the edge of the rushes. Use caution near the rushes: ice conditions will deteriorate quickly in these areas. **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 fishing is not recommended.** The winter aeration system is operating. **Black Crappie** - Slow: **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with bait. **Walleye** - Slow.

### Rice Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Silver Lake (Worth)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** The winter aeration system is operating. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with bait in near vegetation. Best bite is early morning. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

Ice fishing is not recommended. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### East Okoboji Lake

The lake is fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 6 to 10 inches in most areas. [The walleye season closes February 15.](#) **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting will most likely be needed.

### Ingham Lake

The lake is completely ice covered. Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

### Lost Island Lake

Ice thickness is around 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Minnewashta Lake

Ice thickness is 7 to 10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **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 7 to 10 inches. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Spirit Lake

The lake is fully ice covered. Ice thickness is 6 to 10 inches in most areas. Ice can be highly variable. Be aware of large heaves and areas where the ice has started to split apart. [The walleye season closes February 15.](#) **Black Crappie** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. Many nice-sized fish have been seen lately. **Bluegill** - Fair. **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. Ice conditions are highly variable with 4 to 10 inches. Foot traffic and small ATV use should be possible in most areas. Shoreline access is the biggest issue for anglers; use caution. [The walleye season closes February 15.](#) **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good. **Pumpkinseed** - Good. **Walleye** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting may be needed.

Area ice conditions are highly variable. Most areas are still completely ice covered with 6 to 10 inches. Ice conditions deteriorated extensively with consistent above freezing temperatures the last couple weeks. Use extra caution along shorelines and accesses that have deteriorated the most. [The walleye season closes February 15](#). For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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## NORTHEAST

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

Anglers can possibly catch a few walleye on the Cedar as it should open back up from the hard freeze. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Interior rivers have opened back up with reports of anglers catching a few walleye. Ice conditions have deteriorated quickly; **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.

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## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### [Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

Water level is 8.19 feet at Lansing and is expected to stabilize over the next week. Ice conditions are deteriorating quickly; **ice fishing is not recommended**. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### [Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

Water level is near 614.2 feet at Lynxville and is expected to stabilize over the next week. Ice conditions have deteriorated; **ice fishing is not recommended**. The Lynxville boat ramp is open; be cautious of ice flows. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice-sized sauger are being caught on jig and minnow; bite can be slow at times. **Walleye** - Fair: Slow bite at times; nice fish being found on live bait. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

### [Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

Water level is near 6.4 feet at Lynxville and is expected to stabilize over the next week. Ice conditions have deteriorated; **ice fishing is not recommended**. The boat ramps in Guttenberg are open; be cautious of ice flows as ice above dam has not been released. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice-sized sauger are being caught on jig and minnow; bite can be slow at times. **Walleye** - Fair: Slow bite at times; nice fish being found on live bait. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

While some backwaters still have ice, ice conditions have deteriorated. **Ice fishing is not recommended**. Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen slightly and are expected to stabilize over the next week. The main channel is opening along with many boat ramps. Early tailwater fishing results have been mixed with some nice catches of walleye; many anglers are searching for biting fish.

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### [Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

The river is steady at Dubuque at near 6.1 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 8.6 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Ice fishing is being reported, especially in the various marinas. Ice quality is deteriorating fast. **Ice fishing is not recommended**. **Sauger** - Slow: Weak bite; use live bait with stinger hooks. **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 to near 6.5 feet at Bellevue. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Some ice fishing is taking place; ice quality is rapidly deteriorating. **Ice fishing is not recommended**. The Bellevue

City ramp and DNR ramp are open, but subject to ice flows. **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** - Slow: Weak bite; use live bait with stinger hooks.

### [Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is steady at near 6.2 feet at Fulton, 10.4 feet at Camanche and near 5.0 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 34 degrees. Ramps are open, but subject to some ice flows. **Walleye** - Slow: Weak bite; use live bait with stinger hooks.

### [Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is steady at near 6.9 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 34 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: The walleye and sauger bite has been tough for most of the river. When fishing is slow, use bait and stinger hooks.

The river is rapidly changing. Most of the main channel is open, but major ice flows have been seen all week. Ice fishing is taking place, but ice is suspect in many places. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Most boat ramps are open, but may be subject to ice flows. Water levels are rising throughout the district. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

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## SOUTHEAST

### [Big Hollow Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Not open water yet.

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Ice continues to deteriorate.

### [Lake Darling](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Temperatures have been in the mid-5's most of the week.

### Lake Geode

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Still covered with a thin layer of slush/ice.

### Lost Grove Lake

**Unsafe ice conditions.** Most, if not all of the ice, won't hold much weight.

### **Skunk River (Coppock to Mississippi River)**

The Skunk River in this section is pretty much wide open.

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

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### Central Park Lake

Ice thickness is 6 inches; shorelines may be weak. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Largemouth Bass** – Good.

### Coralville Reservoir

The lake is ice covered. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

### Diamond Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Hannen Lake

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches with the top 2 inches reported as bad.

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Kent Park Lake

**Ice fishing is not recommended.**

### Lake Macbride

**Ice fishing is not recommended.** There may be protected areas with decent ice, but much of it has deteriorated.

### 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 fishing is not recommended.** There may be protected areas with decent ice, but much of it has deteriorated.

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches on most of the lake; shorelines may be weak. The aeration system is on which will open up the south end of the lake.

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

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

Most district lakes have poor ice conditions and are not recommended for travel. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### [Hawthorn Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

### [Lake Miami](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

### [Lake Sugema](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

### [Lake Wapello](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

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

**Unsafe ice conditions.**

### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** The current lake level is 902.91 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](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.**



Unsafe ice conditions on area lakes. Ice is melting along the shoreline. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

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## SOUTHWEST

### [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

As of Jan. 31, ice thickness was 10 inches off the boat ramp, but less as you go out. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Additional trout have been stocked and will be available in good numbers as ice recedes from the shoreline, or if better ice conditions return. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Catch trout as ice recedes from the shoreline with ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. Trout tend to swim close to shore in depths out to 10 feet. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

Big Creek Lake ice is in poor condition; edges are starting to open. Anglers should stay off the ice.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: As ice recedes from the shoreline catch trout with ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Terra Lake](#)

**Unsafe ice conditions.** An additional stocking of trout will occur as ice recedes. The [DNR Trout Fishing website](#) will be updated when the trout are stocked. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: As ice recedes from the shoreline catch trout with ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Triumph Park West](#)

**Ice fishing is not recommended due to poor ice conditions.** Additional trout

were stocked in both the east and west ponds that can be caught when the ice recedes. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Catch trout in the open water inside the fishing pier and as ice recedes from the edge with ice fishing panfish jigs tipped with waxworms under a float or cast small plastics. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Most ponds and lakes in Central Iowa have poor ice conditions with some open water. Ice fishing season is done in Central Iowa. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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

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### [Three Mile Lake](#)

Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool.

### [Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

Shoreline edges are opening up. Variable ice conditions with less than 3 inches in some areas.

Ice conditions have deteriorated on Mount Ayr district lakes. Shoreline edges are opening up on larger lakes; some small ponds are ice-free. **Unsafe ice conditions.** For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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This year's walleye challenge has been expanded to other states across the Midwest and into Canada as part of a larger fisheries research project funded by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

New this year, participants can choose the free entry option to qualify for non-cash prizes or pay the \$25 fee to qualify for all prizes including cash payouts.

Iowa anglers compete only against other Iowa anglers for biweekly prizes, while all catches from across the Midwest qualify for the grand prize drawings at the end of the event. Grand prizes for 2024 include a week-long fishing trip to Lac Seul Evergreen Lodge in Canada, as well as equipment from companies like St. Croix Rods.

Secret spots stay secret. Specific catch locations from anglers are not listed on public leaderboards.

Learn about the data collected the first two years of the walleye challenge and new incentives for this year's challenge online with the [DNR YouTube video](#).