

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



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NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Water clarity is around 12 inches. Water levels are several inches below the crest of the spillway. **The fish cleaning station is closed for the season. Ramp docks are removed for the season. The dock at the marina boat ramp at the NE side of the lake will remain in year-round. Black -Crappie** - Fair: Target crappie in and around the fish house in Town Bay along the Ice House Point shoreline and near the inlet bridge. Many of the keeper-sized crappie are 10- to 12-inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Try fishing along Ice House Point, the inlet bridge, the east shore near the outlet, and Shotgun Hill.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The west boat ramp courtesy dock will remain in during the winter. The other ramp courtesy docks have been removed for the season.

[North Twin Lake](#)

Water levels are around 20 inches below crest. **Boat ramp courtesy docks on the south boat ramps are removed for the season.**

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

Walleye – Slow: Anglers are picking up some walleye from shore. The Chautauqua Jetty and Frank Starr Park attract a lot of walleye in the evenings. If there is flow coming through the inlet, it is also worth fishing there.

Water temperatures continue to cool down. Boat ramp docks have been removed. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

Catchable-sized rainbow trout were stocked on Nov. 26. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Good.

Clear Lake

Water level is 8.6 inches below crest. Water temperature is in the mid-30s. **All courtesy docks have been taken out for the season.** **Walleye** - Fair: Try live bait and jigs. Best bite is after sun set. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Anglers are catching a few yellow bass while targeting walleye.

Crystal Lake

The courtesy docks have been removed for the season. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Drift fish or troll small jigs in the dredge cut. **Walleye** - Slow: Try fishing near vegetation edge and along the old roadbed.

Rice Lake

Any water west of the north boat ramp is a waterfowl refuge and is closed to all activity from Sept. 1st through the final day of the duck season. Signs across the lake mark this area. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Walleye** - slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. Use a jig and a piece of crawler near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

The courtesy dock has been taken out for the season. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** - slow: Try a jig head tipped with a piece of crawler.

Winnebago River

River level is 5.03 feet. **Smallmouth Bass** - No report. Try fishing in the deeper pools. **Walleye** - Fair.

For information on lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

Lake level is just below crest. The ramp/dock at upper gar can be used for the remainder of the open water season. **Black Crappie** - Good: **Bluegill** - Good: Many bluegill seen; easily catchable around functional docks. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Bass are a ways off shore; you can find some around docks and structure. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Many perch seen; sorting most likely needed.

Ingham Lake

Walleye - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Lake level is below crest. **Courtesy docks have been pulled for the season.** **Walleye** - Good: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

Spirit Lake

Lake level is a few inches below crest. **The ramp/dock at Templar can be used for the remainder of the season.** **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are finding quality-size crappie up to 14-inches. **Bluegill** - Good. **Walleye** - Good: Evening bite is best with leech and bobber from shore or crankbaits and slip bobbers by boat. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Sorting is needed; anglers are finding many of acceptable size.

West Okoboji Lake

Lake level is a few inches below crest. Triboji dock is in. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Many smaller/shallower lakes have started to ice over in the nights. Most fish have moved in closer to shore as temperature drop; catches has fallen off a bit for most species. Most ramp docks have been pulled for the season. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Water level remain low to steady. **Black Crappie** - Good: Find fish in backwater areas with woody debris. Use a minnow under a bobber. **Smallmouth Bass** - Slow: Use a hook tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. **Walleye** - Good: Use live baits.

Decorah District Streams

Trout stream stocking are done for the year. Staff would like to thank all our trout anglers and supporters for making this season fun and rewarding. Many trout streams flow through public areas where hunting is allowed. **Brook Trout** - Slow: Brook trout are more interested in spawning than feeding making catching more difficult. Dabble a fly through the narrow unvegetated runs or find deeper pool above beaver dams. **Brown Trout** - Good: Avoid walking in clear gravel areas in faster moving water, these are trout nests or redds. Use flies imitating minnows or other small fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Catchable stocking is complete for the season, but plenty of fish remain in streams. A small chunk of worm or cheese under a bobber fished through a deeper hole will turn a rainbow head. Cut the line on a deeply hooked fish if returning it to the water.

Lake Hendricks

Water clarity is good. Few anglers are out. Slow your presentation with cooler water. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try fishing near shoreline with live baits. **Bluegill** – Good: Use a small piece of worm or waxworm under a bobber. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Use a spinner or crankbait with a slow retrieve in cooler water.

Lake Meyer

Water clarity is good. Few anglers fishing this lake this week. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use spinnerbaits or small jig with plastic tail in deeper water. **Bluegill** - Good: Find bluegills near shore. Use a small piece of worm under a bobber or small spinnerbait with a slow retrieve. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use artificial lures with a slow retrieve in the evenings.

Turkey River (above Clermont)

Water levels remain low to steady. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Find smallies in deeper holes or near rock ledges. Use a small jig or crankbait. **Walleye** - Good: Try a jig tipped with twister tail or spinnerbait through deeper holes or near rock ledges.

Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Water levels remain low to steady. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Find fish near drop-offs or rock ledges with a spinnerbait or crankbait. **Walleye** - Good: Find deeper holes with a crankbait or jig tipped with enough weight to get your lure near bottom.

Volga Lake

Water clarity is good. Few anglers are out fishing with dropping temperatures. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Use live baits with a slow retrieve. **Bluegill** – Good: Try tube jigs tipped with artificial attractant or a small piece of worm under a bobber off the jetties or along rocky shoreline in the morning, moving deeper in the evening. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: Try crankbaits at fish drop-offs and around brush piles toward evening.

Temperature falling through the weekend with highs in the low 20s to single digits at night by Saturday. Gusty northwest winds. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers are catching a few walleye on the Cedar River. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow.

Dalton Pond

The stop logs have been pulled. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try live bait or artificial lures or jigs.

Heritage Pond

Heritage Pond was stocked with catchable rainbow trout on Nov. 8. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try live bait or artificial lures or jigs. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

North Prairie Lake

North Prairie Lake was stocked with catchable rainbow trout on Nov. 8. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Try live bait or artificial lures or jigs. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Interior rivers remain at low levels; fishing has been slow. Trout streams remain in excellent condition and provide great angling opportunities for rainbow and brown trout. For more information, contact Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.0 feet at Lansing and is predicted to remain stable next week. Water temperature is in mid-40s. **Black Crappie** - Good. Crappie are on the fall feed. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow in backwater fallen trees and stumps. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle with a hooked tipped with a small piece of worm or waxworm. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Cast crankbaits along woody debris near lower portions of backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Good. Use gaudy white spinners in backwater areas. **Sauger** - Fair. Tailwater fishing may improve with colder water temperatures. **Smallmouth Bass** - Excellent: Smallmouth are biting in areas with moderate current. Cast spinners and crankbaits along the main channel rock shorelines. **Walleye** - Fair: Fishing in the tailwaters may improve with colder water temperatures. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch at the lower ends of backwater near the openings.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 614.6 feet at Lynxville and is stable. Water temperature is in the low 40s. **Black Crappie** - Good. Crappie are on the fall feed. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow in backwater fallen trees and stumps. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle with hooked tipped with a small piece of worm or waxworms. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Cast crankbaits around woody debris near lower portions of backwaters. **Northern Pike** - Good: Use gaudy white spinners in backwater areas. **Sauger** - Fair: Tailwater fishing may improve with colder water temperatures. **Smallmouth Bass** - Excellent: Smallmouth are biting in areas with moderate current. Cast spinners and crankbaits along main channel rock shorelines or spillway. **Walleye** - Fair: Fishing in the tailwaters may improve with colder water temperature. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch at the lower ends of backwaters near the openings.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is stable at 6.4 feet at Guttenberg. Water temperature is in the mid-40s. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are on the fall feed. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow in backwater fallen trees and stumps. **Bluegill** - Good: Use light tackle with hooked tipped with a small piece of worm or waxworms. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Cast crankbaits along woody

debris near lower portions of backwaters. **Sauger** - Good: Tailwater fishing may improve with colder water temperatures. **Smallmouth Bass** - Excellent: Fish are biting in areas with moderate current. Cast spinners and crankbaits along main channel rock shorelines. **Walleye** - Fair: Fishing in the tailwaters may improve with colder water temperature. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Look for perch at the lower ends of backwaters near the openings.

Upper Mississippi River levels at Pools 9 -11 are stable this week. Water temperatures have fallen into the low 40s. With the cold weather forecast, fish should start to move into overwintering holes.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is stable at 6.0 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.8 feet at the RR bridge. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 42 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Excellent: Hit brush piles with small jigs and minnows. **Bluegill** - No report: Bluegills are starting to move to the brush piles and dead falls in deeper backwater habitats. **Largemouth Bass** - Excellent: Bass are stacked up along shoreline old weed lines and in large woody habitats. **Northern Pike** - Good: Pike fishing has picked up with the cooler temperature. They will bite right up to ice-in conditions. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Try small crankbaits or spinners along rock lines. Smallies may be moving off the shallow rocks right now and will be in deeper water. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig and minnow in the tailwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some yellow perch being caught in tailwater and backwater areas. Strong populations are present on the Mississippi River but they can be a challenge to find.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is stable at near 6.6 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 42 degrees. Water is clear. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are starting to show up in the creel; use minnows in brush piles in larger sloughs. **Bluegill** - Good: Try fishing woody habitats in deeper backwater areas. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Find catfish on mud flats with stink or cheese bait. Catfish often bite much later in the year than most people expect. **Largemouth Bass** - Excellent: Anglers are using jig baits along slough brush piles in side channel areas. Fish are concentrating on woody habitats. **Northern Pike** - Good: Pikes are biting along channel edges. Pike will aggressively bite right until ice in conditions.. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Try spinners or jigs around rock lines to catch abundant smallies. Fish areas with strong current. **Walleye** - Fair: Some angling is beginning to take place in tailwaters using jigs and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Starting to hear of some yellow perch being caught. They seemed to have disappeared for a while, but strong populations are present on the Mississippi River.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is rising to near 5.7 feet at Fulton, 9.9 feet at Camanche and 5.1 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 43 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use minnows in brush piles in larger sloughs. **Bluegill** - Excellent: Fish are starting to move to backwater habitats with woody debris. **Largemouth Bass** - Excellent: Fish are really concentrating on woody habitats in the backwaters. Use spinner and chatter baits. **Northern Pike** - Good: Pike bite well deep into the fall; white spinnerbaits work best. **Smallmouth Bass** - Excellent: Use spinners or jigs next to rock lines with strong current. **Walleye** - Fair: Tailwater angling is starting to fire up; most anglers are using a jig and minnow. **White Bass** - Good: Try flashy spinners or small white jigs along shorelines near the tailwater.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is stable at near 6.3 feet at Rock Island. The water is clear. Water temperature is around 43 degrees. **Freshwater Drum** - No report: Worm rig with egg sinker fished along shore in moderate current will catch this consistent biter. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Try fishing along the many rock lines with moderate current to catch abundant smallmouth bass. Pool 15 can be an overlooked spot for smallmouth; fish along the abundant rock lines in moderate to fast current. Smallies live in rock areas with current.

Conditions are expected to change greatly this week. Water levels are still low. Water temperatures are in the low 40s, but expected to fall greatly near Thanksgiving. **Boaters should use caution to avoid backing off end of ramps.** Fall fishing can be great until ice-in. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 6.69 feet and forecast to fall at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. Backwaters have open water, but conditions may change with colder temperature in the forecast. **Sauger** - No Report: We have not received any reports of catching saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Fishing should improve as water temperatures fall. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs and minnows. Look for walleyes in Sylvan Slough and below the Lock and Dam. **White Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies around brush piles and snags in the backwaters and side channels. Use minnows under a bobber or jigs and plastics.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 5.16 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and forecast to fall. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers below Lock and Dam 16. Backwaters have open water, but conditions may change with colder temperatures in the forecast. **Sauger** - Fair: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows below the Lock and Dam. **Walleye** - Fair: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **White Crappie** - Fair: Look for crappies around brush piles and snags in backwaters and side channels. Use minnows under a bobber or jigs and plastics.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 5.70 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater stage is forecast to fall the rest of the week. Backwaters have open water, but conditions may change with colder temperature in the forecast. **Sauger** - No report: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnow or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **White Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies around brush piles and snags in backwaters and side channels. Use minnows under a bobber or jigs and plastics.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 3.21 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. Tailwater stage is forecast to fall the rest of the week. **Sauger** - No Report: Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnow. **White Crappie** - No Report: Look for crappies around brush piles and snags in backwaters and side channels. Use minnows under a bobber or jigs and plastics.

Tailwater stages have risen over a foot since last week. River stage is forecast to fall the rest of the week. Main channel temperature is around 44 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

Discovery Park Pond

The fall trout release was Oct. 26th. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Anglers continue to catch trout. Look for them around the habitat around the shoreline out in 5-6 feet of water.

Emma Young Pond

The fall trout stocking was Oct. 26. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Still some trout left in the pond. A good spot to catch them is right around and under the fishing pier.

Lake Belva Deer

Water temperature is in the mid-40s. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Look for them along the old creek channel running down through the flooded timber. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish for them like you would if you were ice fishing; use small ice fishing jigs tipped with a waxworm in deeper water.

Lake Darling

Water temperature is in the low to mid-40s. A lot of "steam" coming off the water this morning (11/26). **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish either the big brush piles off the south side down by the dam or some of the other habitat in 10-14 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: They are hanging around their "ice fishing spots" in the middle of the lake. Vertical jigging with ice fishing jigs will work.

Lake Geode

Water temperature is in the mid-40s and falling. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find crappies in rock piles and other fish habitat in 8-10 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Slow: Look for them out in the fish habitat in 8 to 10 feet of water.

Lost Grove Lake

Water temperature has dropped into the mid 40s this week and continues to fall. **Gates at the boat ramp down at the dam for backcast bay are closed for the season.** **Bluegill** - Fair: They are hanging around their winter haunts now; try vertical jigging around deeper trees in 18-26 feet of water, which continues to be tough with all the wind.

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

Hawthorn Lake

Black Crappie - Slow: Try jig and minnow combinations in brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use jigs around brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use plastics or spinnerbaits around the fishing jetties and rip-rapped shorelines.

Lake Keomah

Lake Keomah is drained for a lake restoration project. Please keep out of the lake bed. Dried silt appears solid, but is very soft.

Lake Miami

Black Crappie - Slow: Use jigs and minnows around cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try small jigs in brush piles and along shore. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use plastics or spinnerbaits around brush piles and along rip-rapped shorelines.

Lake Sugema

Black Crappie - Slow: Try jigs and minnows in standing timber and along rocky shorelines. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around submerged brush piles and shoreline. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Try plastics or spinnerbaits along rip-rapped shorelines and around submerged structures.

Lake Wapello

Black Crappie - Slow: Target cedar tree piles with small jigs. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try small jigs

around brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use plastics and crankbaits around brush piles and rip-rapped shoreline.

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

Trout were stocked on Oct. 24. Use small jigs tipped with a chunk of nightcrawler or in-line spinners. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.36 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigs around submerged cedar tree piles. Target brush piles in 15-20 feet of water. **Walleye** - Slow: Try trolling crankbaits or crawler harnesses around rock piles and old river channel. **All walleye less than 15-inches must be immediately released unharmed.** **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Use jigging spoons or crankbaits over rock piles and submerged islands.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Bluegill - Slow: Try small jigs around shorelines and submerged structure near the campground shoreline. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use plastics around fishing jetties and along face of the dam. Slow down your presentation.

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

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked on Oct. 31. Use spinners, spoons, minnows, wax worms or flies. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Des Moines River \(Saylorville to Red Rock\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: Cast jigs tipped with live minnows, twister tails, or swim baits below Saylorville dam, city dams, and any deeper pool with slow current.

[Des Moines River \(Stratford to Saylorville Lake\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: Cast jigs tipped with live minnows, twister tails, or swim baits into deeper pools on outside bends and above and below any rock bars deposited where small streams dump in.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked at on Oct. 31. Cast spinners, spoons, blade baits, live minnows, wax worms, or floating flies. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Terra Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked on Oct. 28. Cast spinners, spoons, blade baits, live minnows, wax worms, or floating flies. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Triumph Park West](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked on Oct. 28 in Triumph West and East. Cast spinners, spoons, blade baits, live minnows, wax worms, or floating flies. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Lake level is 11 feet below normal pool. **Boat ramp lanes are out of the water at the main boat ramp.**

[Twelve Mile Creek Lake](#)

The dock is in at the main boat ramp. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Catch yellow perch up to 11-inches with a jig tipped with live bait along creek channels.

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

Lake level increased with recent rains, but is still about 1 foot below normal. Boaters can use boat ramps at their own risk.

Water temperatures are in the mid to upper 40s in most Mount Ayr district lakes. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

Take It Outside this Holiday Season

Here are a few of Iowa's best late fall and winter outdoor activities:

[Take a gratitude walk.](#) Pause, reflect and recharge yourself while walking in Iowa's state parks, trail systems and nature areas. Bundle up, enjoy viewing wildlife and think about what you are grateful for.

Go hunting. Many families enjoy spending Thanksgiving in the field hunting together. Bring a novice along, perhaps a neighbor or cousin who has never been hunting before.

Enjoy a scenic drive. Load up the car and visit a state or county park. With dozens of parks to choose from, late fall and winter provides unique viewing and scenic beauty.

Pedal a trail. Cool-weather biking can be an invigorating way to explore Iowa's immense trail system. Or conquer winter on a fat-tire bike.

