

# Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



## 2025 IOWA FISHING REGULATIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE & AT LICENSE RETAILERS



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## NORTHWEST

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

The lake is covered in thin ice. Unsafe conditions.

### [Lake Cornelia](#)

Ice thickness is 3 to 4 inches. Yellow perch: no report.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

On December 5th, the lake was completely covered in 3 to 4 inch thick ice. Warmer temperature forecasted over the weekend will likely degrade ice conditions. There is open water fishing at the fish house in Tow Bay - area underneath the structure is kept ice free with a water agitator.

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

The lake is partially covered with ice. Conditions are unknown and unsafe.

As of December 5th, most area lakes are covered in ice ranging from 1 to 4 inches thick. Unsafe ice in most areas. Warmer temperature over the weekend will degrade ice conditions and many area may open back up. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### [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

Ice thickness is 4 to 5 inches near shore. Anglers should use a spud bar to test the ice conditions prior to venturing out. **Black Crappie** - Good: Fish near the rushes on the north shore. **Bluegill** -Slow: Fish a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation. **Walleye** -No report. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Fish a jig tipped with bait in 2 to 3 feet of water.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 5 inches near shore. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish a small jig tipped with bait.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 4 to 5 inches near shore. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. Use a jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

### Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 6 to 7 inches near shore. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Yellow Perch** - slow: Try a jig tipped with bait in 2 to 3 inches of water.

Clear Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake have aeration system running. Avoid any open water areas and be cautious of waterfowl holes on these lakes. Check ice thickness often as you go. For information on lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### East Okoboji Lake

Lake level is just below crest. The lake is fully ice covered. **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

Water is fully ice covered. **Walleye** - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Lake is fully ice covered. **Walleye** - Good: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

### Spirit Lake

The lake is fully iced over. Templar lagoon and out from Hales Slough boat ramp have the best ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are finding quality-size crappie up to 14-inches. **Bluegill** - Good. **Walleye** - Good: The Night shore bite has been good. Evening has been 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.

Most lakes are now completely frozen over. Most areas have 5 or less inches of ice and many of the larger lakes have holes that have just frozen over recently. 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 Office at 712-336-1840.

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## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Impoundments and areas with no current have about 1 to 4 inches of ice. Check ice depths often. A variety of fish taking waxworm or minnows. **Black Crappie** - Good: Find fish in backwater areas with woody debris. Use a minnow under a bobber. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use a hook tipped with a minnow or nightcrawler. **Walleye** - Fair: Use live baits.

### **Decorah District Streams**

A good trout stream will stay open during cold weather. Avoid walking on cleared gravel areas in faster moving water. These are Brook and Brown Trout nests or redds. Many streams flow through public areas where hunting occurs. Wear plenty of orange so hunters can see you . **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: 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

With cold weather, Lake Hendricks is iced over. It currently has about 4 to 5 inches of ice. Please avoid the area around the aerator. Few anglers out. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try fishing with live baits. **Bluegill** – Good: Use a small piece of worm or waxworm under a bobber.

### **Manchester Area Streams**

Trout streams are in excellent condition. Warm weather forecast through Monday should provide good insect hatches for trout fishing, match the hatch.

Interior rivers remain at low levels and fishing has been slow. Trout streams remain in excellent conditions and provide great angling for both rainbow and browns. For more information, contact your local bait shops.

### Lake Meyer

Water clarity excellent with minimal ice depths. Use extreme caution when going out on first ice. Few anglers fishing this lake this week. **Black Crappie** - No report. **Bluegill** - No report.

### Turkey River (above Clermont)

Impoundments and areas with no current have about 1 to 4 inches of ice. Check ice depths often. A variety of fish taking waxworms or minnows. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use live baits for best luck fishing near bottom. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Find bass in deeper holes. Use small jig or crankbait. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with twister tail or a minnow and vertical jig about 1 foot off bottom.

### Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Impoundments and areas with no current have 1 to 4 inches of ice. Check ice depths often. **Walleye** -No report.

### Volga Lake

Water clarity good with minimal ice depths. Use extreme caution and check ice depths often when going on ice first. Few anglers fishing with approaching deer season. **Black Crappie** – No report. **Bluegill** – No report.

Most area rivers and streams are low with some ice along the edges. Majority of lakes and ponds covered with 2 to 4 inches of ice. Temperatures rising through weekend with upper 40s for high and 30s for lows may cause some ice to melt. Opening shotgun deer season starts Saturday and ends Wednesday. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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# MISSISSIPPI RIVER

## Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.1 feet at Lansing and is predicted to remain stable next week. Water temperature is in 30s. Ice is building at Shore Slough. **Black Crappie** - Fair. Crappie are biting with the first ice up. 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: Look for Largemouth biting through the ice in backwaters once the ice is safe. **Northern Pike** - No report. As ice builds in backwaters try tip-ups baited with shiners. **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 613.2 feet at Lynxville and is stable. Water temperature is in the low 30s. Avoid ice at the ramp in Bussey Lake, Guttenberg as it is unsafe. Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting 2 to 3 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair. Some crappies are biting with the first ice up. 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** - Fair: Look for Largemouth biting through the ice in backwaters once the ice is safe. **Northern Pike** - No report: As ice builds in backwaters try tip-ups baited with shiners. **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 has fallen to 4.8 feet at Guttenberg. Water temperature is in the mid 30s. Ice is forming on backwaters. Avoid ice in areas with any current yet. Avoid the mouth of the creek at Mud Lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappie are biting with the first ice up. Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm or 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** - Fair: Look for Largemouth biting through the ice in backwaters once the ice is safe. **Northern Pike** No report: As ice builds in backwaters try tip-ups baited with shiners. **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. The cold weather has anglers readying to transition from open water fishing to ice fishing. Water temperatures have fallen into the 30s. Ice is not yet safe on areas with any current. Freezing temperatures have ice building in backwater lakes. A few reports of backwaters having 3 to 4 inches of ice with some panfish biting. Anglers should use a spud bar to test the ice prior to venturing out.

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## Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is receding at 5.6 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.2 feet at the RR bridge. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 38 degrees. Boat ramp at Spruce Creek is still open as of Saturday. **Black Crappie** - Good: Hit brush piles with small jigs and minnows. Icing over conditions will make fishing difficult. **Bluegill** - No report: Bluegills are starting to

move to the brush piles and dead falls in deeper backwater habitats. Conditions are though right now until safe backwater ice develops. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: 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** - No report: 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: Some walleye and saugers are being taken using 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 receding and near 5.9 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 39 degrees. Water is clear. Boat ramps remain open at DNR station and Bellevue City Ramp. **Black Crappie** - Good: Crappie are starting to show up in the creel; use minnows in brush piles in larger sloughs. Conditions are rough right now until safe backwater ice develops. **Bluegill** - Good: Try fishing woody habitats in deeper backwater areas. Conditions are rough right now until safe backwater ice develops. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: 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** - No report: Try rock lines with spinners or jigs for abundant smallies. You need to be in 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 receding and near 5.4 feet at Fulton, 9.6 feet at Camanche and 4.9 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 40 degrees. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use minnows in brush piles in larger sloughs. Conditions are tough right now until safe backwater ice develops. **Bluegill** - Excellent: Fish are starting to move to backwater habitats with woody debris. Conditions are tough right now until safe backwater ice develops. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: Fish are really concentrating on woody habitats in the backwaters. Use spinner and chatter baits. **Northern Pike** - Good: White spinnerbaits work best. **Smallmouth Bass** - No report. 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.

### **Mississippi River Pool 15**

The water level is receding at Rock Island near 6.2 feet. Water is clear and temperature is around 41 degrees.

Conditions have changed over this past week with the cold temperature. Water levels are still low. Water temperatures are in the upper 30s. Skim ice is reported in most backwaters. Fall fishing can be great until ice-in. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

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### **Mississippi River Pool 16**

Tailwater stage is 4.67 feet and forecast to rise at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. As of December 5th, the Marquette St. Boat ramp was free of ice. Ramp conditions may change. Backwaters are frozen over. Unsafe ice conditions. **Sauger** - No Report: We have not received any reports of catching saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. 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.

### **Mississippi River Pool 17**

Tailwater stage is 3.13 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and forecast to rise slightly as of December 5th, the main channel was frozen in making the tailwaters inaccessible. Backwaters are frozen over. Unsafe ice conditions. **Walleye** - No report. As of December 5th the main channel was frozen in making the tailwaters inaccessible.

### **Mississippi River Pool 18**

Tailwater stage is 2.63 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater stage has fallen close to 3 feet since last week. As of December 5th, there is some ice at the bottom of the ramps and some flow ice coming down the channel that could limit access to the tailwaters. Backwaters are frozen in. Unsafe ice conditions.

### **Mississippi River Pool 19**

Tailwater stage is 1.10 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. Tailwater stage has fallen close to 2 feet since last week. The Tama beach boat ramp is frozen in. Backwaters are iced over. Unsafe ice conditions.

Tailwater stages have been falling this past week. Main channel temperature is around 32 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Unsafe ice conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

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## **SOUTHEAST**

### [Lake Belva Deer](#)

Last weekend's cold weather started to put some ice on the lake back in the bays. The quieter parts of the lake got some ice on December 4th.

### [Lake Darling](#)

Cold weather has put a thin coat of ice on the upper end of the lake and some of the bays. Most of the middle of the lake remains open water. Docks were removed last week.

### [Diamond Lake](#)

Most of the lake skimmed with ice. Geese are keeping a few areas ice free.

### [Lake Geode](#)

Very thin ice around the edges. With a warm up this weekend will probably be back to open water.

### [Lost Grove Lake](#)

The wind is keeping most of the lake open but there is some surface ice in the protected bays.

### [Kent Park Lake](#)

Most of lake is iced over except middle where geese are keeping it open. Ponds are skimmed over as well.

### [Skunk River \(Rose Hill to Coppock\)](#)

Fairly large ice pieces are floating downriver, but fair amount of open water remains.

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

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### [Coralville Reservoir](#)

Most of the lake has skimmed over with ice.

### [Lake Macbride](#)

The lake is still 90% open as of 12/5. Water temperatures are around 40 degrees. There are docks in at Main Ramp and Anglers Point Ramp, as well as slips at Main Ramp and Opie Ave Ramp.

### [Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The coves are skimming over with ice. Docks have been removed.

### [Union Grove Lake](#)

Most of the lake has skimmed over but there is a small patch open due to geese. An aeration system will be running at the south end of the lake eventually.

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

The river is iced up. There is 2 to 3 inches of ice in the Pinicon Ridge backwaters..

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

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### [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** - No report: 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** - No report: 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 903.22 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody. **Black Crappie** - No report: Try jigs around submerged cedar tree piles. Target brush piles in 15-20 feet of water. **Walleye** - No report: Target rock piles and submerged island. **All walleye less than 15-inches must be immediately released unharmed.** **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - No report: Use jigging spoons or crankbaits over rock piles and submerged islands.

### [Red Haw Lake](#)

**Bluegill** - No report: Try small jigs around shorelines and submerged structure near the

campground shoreline. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: 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. Skim ice is forming along the lake edges and in coves. Ice is not thick enough to support anglers.

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## SOUTHWEST

### Lake Petocka

On December 4, Lake Petocka was mostly covered in thin ice except for a small area of open water in the center. Rainbow **Trout** - Fair: If the ice recedes catch trout casting 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

On December 4, Terra Lake was completely covered in thin ice. Rainbow **Trout** - Slow: If the ice recedes during warmer weather, 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

On December 4th, Triumph ponds were mostly covered with thin ice. 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.

As of December 4, lakes in Central Iowa were mostly open water except for small areas of thin ice in wind protected, shallow water. Ponds in Central Iowa were mostly covered in thin ice. More fishing reports will be added when the ice fishing season begins. 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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### Lake Anita

Ice fishing has always been good at Lake Anita. The panfish population looks good heading into winter.

### Meadow Lake

Meadow Lake will be a good ice fishing destination this winter. The Bluegill will average 8 inches and there is a good population of 9 inches black crappies. Find a deeper cedar tree pile for best success.

### Prairie Rose Lake

Prairie Rose has provided excellent ice fishing since the renovation. This winter will be no exception with large bluegill and a decent crappie population.

### Viking Lake

Viking Lake will offer good crappie fishing this winter. The bluegills will average 7.5 inches.

There were no fishing reports this week due to weather. This is a good time to prepare ice fishing tackle for the season ahead. 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 11 feet below normal pool. **Boat ramp lanes are out of the water at the main boat ramp.**

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

Dock removed for winter. Main lake basin open on south ends as of 12/4.

### [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.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes are partially covered with ice. Most docks have been removed from lakes for the winter. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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