

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



Summer seasonal positions at Iowa DNR fisheries offices are open for applications until **January 10, 2025**.

Learn about fisheries careers and gain valuable experience while working alongside biologists and technicians. Positions are available in research, management, culture and aquatic invasive species. Six-month positions usually start at the beginning of April and three-month positions start the middle of May.

Learn how to apply [online](#). Get a glimpse into a seasonal fisheries position with the [DNR YouTube video](#).

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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. The ice is too thin to walk on and there are open areas in the center of the lake.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness off of Ice House Point boat ramp is around 4 inches. Ice thickness is variable and much thinner in other areas: there are open areas in the main basin of the lake. There is open water fishing at the fish house in Tow Bay - area underneath the structure is kept ice free with a

water agitator. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a waxworm or small minnow. **Walleye** - Good: Early ice anglers have had good luck using wigglers and small minnows. Ice is variable; check thickness often as you move. Most have been fishing around Ice House Point ramp and near Gunshot hill area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

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

The lake is mostly covered with ice. Thickness is 1 to 5 inches. There are some open water areas so conditions are still really variable. Check ice thickness often as you move.

Most area lakes are covered in ice ranging from 1 to 5 inches thick. Conditions are variable with pockets of open water in many lakes. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

Blue Pit is still ice free. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 5 to 6 inches near shore. Use a spud bar to test the ice conditions before venturing out. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try near the rushes on the north shore. **Bluegill** -Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation. **Walleye** -Slow. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with bait in 2 to 3 feet of water. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Most perch being caught are 4- to 6-inches.

[Crystal Lake](#)

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

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is highly variable. There are several areas of open water. Check ice thickness often as move. **Yellow Perch** - Slow. 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.

Aeration systems are running at Clear Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake. Avoid any open water areas; be cautious of waterfowls holes on these lakes. Check ice thickness often as you move. 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 lake is almost fully ice covered with around 7 inches of ice. There is still a large open hole on the lower basin straight out from Bridges Bay. **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 with around 7.5 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Good: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

Spirit Lake

The lake is fully iced over. Some locations have up to 8 inches of ice; there are areas that are thinner on the main basin that froze more recently. 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 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. **Unsafe ice conditions**; the lake is still mostly open. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Most lakes are completely frozen over. Most areas have 7 or less inches of ice; many larger lakes have holes that have just frozen over recently. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

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

Decorah District Streams

A good trout stream stays 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

Warm weekend weather did little to melt ice. It currently has about 4 to 5 inches of ice. Avoid

the area around the aerator. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try fishing with live baits. **Bluegill** – Good: Use a small piece of worm or waxworm under a bobber.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is 2-3 inches Water clarity is excellent. Use extreme caution when going out on first ice. Check ice thickness often. **Black Crappie** - Good: Find fish about 1 foot off bottom near woody debris. Use small minnow or jig for best luck. **Bluegill** - Good: Find fish about 1 foot off bottom near woody debris. Use small piece of worm wax worms or spikes.

Turkey River (above Clermont)

Impoundments and areas with no current have about 1 to 4 inches of ice. Check ice thickness often. A variety of fish are 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 thickness often.

Volga Lake

Water clarity is good with minimal ice. Use extreme caution; check ice thickness often when going on ice first. **Black Crappie** – Good: Find fish about 1 foot off bottom near woody debris. Use small minnows or jigs. **Bluegill** – Good: Find fish about 1 foot off bottom near woody debris. Use small piece of worm wax worms or spikes.

Most area rivers and streams are low with ice along the edges or on pools. Majority of lakes and ponds covered with 2 to 4 inches of ice. Snow forecasted for Friday into Saturday. Temperatures rising through weekend with upper 30s for high and teens for lows. Second shotgun deer season starts Saturday and ends Sunday, December 22. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams are in excellent condition.

Interior rivers remain at low levels and are pretty well iced over. No reports of ice fishing in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Trout streams remain in excellent condition and provide great angling opportunities for both rainbow and brown trout. For more information, contact Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.4 feet at Lansing and is predicted to remain stable next week. Ice is 5+ inches in Shore Slough and Lansing Village Creek. **Black Crappie** - Good: Nice sized crappies are being caught. Use a small minnow for larger fish. **Bluegill** - Excellent: Good sized bluegills being caught in the early bite. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Anglers are catching nice bass with

waxworms **Northern Pike** - Fair: Early tip-up fishing has been good at times. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Look for perch in the backwaters. Try using minnows for bigger fish.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is stable at 614 feet at Lynxville. Ice is forming at the boat ramp; ice flows are collecting below the dam and tailwater fishing access may be limited. **Avoid ice at the ramp in Bussey Lake; unsafe ice conditions at Guttenberg.** Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting around 5 inches of ice. At Sny Magill there is still thin ice in the middle of Johnson Slough; crossing is not recommended until ice thickens. **Black Crappie** - Good: Nice sized crappie being caught. Try using small minnows for larger fish. **Bluegill** - Excellent: Good sized bluegills being caught in the early bite. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Anglers catching some nice bass fishing waxworms for panfish. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Early tip up fishing has been good at times. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger fishing in the tailwaters has been good; access may be limited by ice. **Walleye** - Good: Fishing in the tailwaters has been good recently but access may be limited by ice. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Look for perch in the backwaters. Try using minnows for bigger fish.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is stable at 6 feet at Guttenberg. Ice is around 5 inches in protected backwaters. Ice is forming at the boat ramps in Guttenberg; ice flows are collecting below the dam and tailwater fishing access maybe limited. Avoid ice in areas with current. Avoid the mouth of the creek at Mud Lake. **Black Crappie** - Good: Nice sized crappie being caught. Try using small minnows for larger fish. **Bluegill** - Good: Good sized bluegills being caught in the early bite. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Anglers catching some nice bass fishing waxworms for panfish. **Sauger** - Good: Walleye fishing in the tailwaters has been good recently but access may be limited by ice. **Walleye** - Good: Fishing in the tailwatershas been good; access may be limited by ice. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Some good reports of perch catches at Mud and Sunfish lakes.

"First ice" fishing has begun on the Upper Mississippi River Pools 9 -11. Freezing temperatures is building ice in backwater lakes. There is around 5 inches of ice on many protected backwaters. Recent warm spells may have weakened ice near some shorelines or areas with slight current; use caution. Use a spud bar to test the ice before venturing out in new areas. Ice will be slippery with warmer temperatures and possible rain this weekend and no snow cover.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is stable at 5.6 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.2 feet at the RR bridge. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 35 degrees in the main channel. **Bluegill** - No report: Some ice fishing is occurring; ice conditions are variable. Use caution and review [ice safety tips](#). **Northern Pike** - Good: Pike fishing has picked up with the cooler temperature. They will bite right up to ice-in conditions. **Walleye** - Slow: Some walleye and saugers are being taken with a jig and minnow in the tailwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is steady and near 5.1 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 34 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Boat ramps remain open at DNR station and Bellevue City Ramp. DNR boat ramp may freeze up again during this cold snap. **Bluegill** - No report: Some ice fishing conditions exist; review [ice safety tips](#) as ice depth is variable. **Walleye** - Fair: Most angling is taking 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 stable at near 4.5 feet at Fulton, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 4.5 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 35 degrees. **Walleye** - Fair: Most tailwater anglers are using some sort of minnow rig.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is receding at Rock Island to near 4.9 feet. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees.

Conditions on the river has been constantly changing. Some ice fishing is occurring in some places; use caution. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 5.01 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and forecast to fall over the weekend. The Marquette St. Boat ramp is free of ice. Ramp conditions may change. We have not received any reports on 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 4.21 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and has risen close to a foot since last weekend. Tailwater stage is forecast to fall over the weekend. The boat ramp in Muscatine is free of ice and a boat dock is in the water. We have not received any report of ice conditions for this pool. **Sauger** - Try fishing for saugers below the dam with jigs and minnow or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No report. Try fishing for walleyes below the dam with jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 4.40 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since last weekend. Tailwater state is forecast to fall over the weekend. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool. **Sauger** - Fair: Tailwater fishing for saugers is being reported as hit or miss. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: Tailwater fishing for walleyes is being reported as hit or miss. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 2.26 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. Tailwater stage has risen close to a foot since last weekend. The Tama beach boat ramp is frozen in. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool.

Tailwater stages have risen since this past weekend but are forecast to fall. Main channel temperature is around 32 degrees. Water clarity is fair. We have not received any reports on ice conditions this week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish

Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Warm weather over the weekend took out most of the ice. Will start reforming before temperature in the 40s and rain this weekend takes it back out.

[Lake Darling](#)

Very warm weather over the weekend (62 degrees on Sunday) and wind took out most of the ice. It has started to refreeze but much of the lake is still open water.

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

After this last weekend's very warm weather (mid 50s on Saturday and 62 on Sunday), even the most shaded ponds have at least some open water and many out in the open lost a fair amount of ice.

[Lake Geode](#)

Most of the lake has reopened. Currently freezing back around the edges again.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The wind is keeping the ice from forming. Not much wind for a couple of days should make some ice.

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

The Skunk River was mostly wide open since last weekend with just a little ice along the south bank. Ice is starting the form again.

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 skimmed over with ice.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake has skimmed over with ice.

[Diamond Lake](#)

Most of the lake is skimmed over with ice. Geese are keeping a couple areas open.

[Hannen Lake](#)

The lake is skimmed over with ice.

[Iowa Lake \(Iowa Co.\)](#)

Geese are keeping some of the lake open.

[Kent Park Lake](#)

Most of the lake is iced over; geese are keeping the middle open. The ponds are all skimmed

over as well.

Lake Macbride

Most of the lake skimmed over Wednesday night. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Otter Creek Lake

The lake is still 5 feet low from the renovation project.

Pleasant Creek Lake

Most of the lake skimmed over Wednesday night. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Union Grove Lake

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

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

Hawthorn Lake

Black Crappie - Slow: Try jig and minnow combinations in brush piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use jigs around brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - No report: Target 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 around brush piles.

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 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 in October. 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 903.11 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. Water temperature is 36 degrees. **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. **Unsafe ice conditions**; ice is not thick enough to support anglers.

SOUTHWEST

[Lake Petocka](#)

Lake Petocka is mostly covered in thin ice. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: When ice fishing conditions become good, catch trout with jigging spoons or panfish jigs tipped with waxworm. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Terra Lake](#)

Terra Lake is completely covered in thin ice. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: When ice fishing conditions become good, catch trout with jigging spoons or panfish jigs tipped with waxworm. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Triumph Park West](#)

Triumph ponds are mostly covered with thin ice. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: When ice fishing conditions become good, catch trout with jigging spoons or panfish jigs tipped with waxworms. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Lakes in Central Iowa are just skimming over with thin ice. Ponds in Central Iowa are mostly covered. Check ice thickness frequently. More fishing reports will be added as ice fishing activity increases. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Lake Anita](#)

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

[Littlefield Lake](#)

Littlefield showed a good panfish population in 2024. Black crappies average 9-inches with an occasional 12-inch fish. Sorting is needed for 8-inch bluegill.

[Meadow Lake](#)

Meadow Lake will be a good ice fishing destination this winter. Bluegill will average 8-inches; there is a good population of 9-inch 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. Bluegills will average 7.5-inches.

Lakes in the southwest district are starting to ice over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** 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.

Green Valley Lake

North end and south end of the lake is mostly ice covered. Large areas of open water around the beach and east arm of the lake.

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 removed for winter. Main lake basin is open on the south ends.

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.