

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.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The main part of the lake has open water. Ice thickness off of Ice House Point boat ramp was around 4-5 inches on December 19th. This is the best ice on the lake - other areas are much thinner or open water. There is open water fishing at the fish house in Town Bay - area underneath the structure is kept ice free with a water agitator. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a waxworm or small minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Early ice anglers have had good luck using wigglers and small minnows. Ice is variable some areas are open water so check conditions often as you move. Most have been fishing around Ice House Point ramp and near Gunshot hill area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Only the bays have frozen over with thin ice.

Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

A few anglers have been making their way out. The lake is mostly covered with ice. Thickness is 1 to 7 inches. There are some open water areas so conditions are still really variable. The best ice is in areas near shore. Recently open areas have just frozen over with thin ice so check ice thickness often as you move. **Yellow Bass** - Fair.

Most area lakes are covered in ice ranging from 1 to 7 inches thick. Conditions are variable with pockets of open water in the bigger lakes. Check ice often if going out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

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 6 to 8 inches near shore. **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 5 to 7 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, Crystal Lake, Rice Lake and Silver Lake. Avoid any open water areas; be cautious of waterfowl 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

The lake is fully ice covered with around 8 inches of ice in most areas. There is still a large open hole on the lower basin straight out from Bridges Bay as well as an open area on the northern most basin that have frozen over only more recently. **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 with around 8 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Lake is fully ice covered with around 8.5 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

A few of the bays now have fishable ice, but the main basin has only frozen over more recently. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Most lakes are completely frozen over and have good access at ramp location. Most areas have 7 or more inches of ice; many larger lakes have holes that have just frozen over recently. Recent snows have covered some of these recently frozen areas making it difficult to differentiate. Check ice often when going out. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

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** - Good: Be stealthy approaching streams. Clarity excellent. Find fish in deeper pools above beaver dams. **Brown Trout** - Good: Anglers may have to be more stealthy when approaching streams due to clear water. Flip a fly along the edge of vegetation. Try using flies imitating minnows or other small fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: 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.

George Wyth Lake

There have been reports of anglers catching panfish on George Wyth Lake. Reported ice conditions are around five inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Fair.

Lake Hendricks

Lake has 8 to 9 inches of ice. Water clarity is good. Avoid the area around the aerator. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers finding fish 6-8 inches using small jigs with wax worms or small plastic.. **Bluegill** – Good: Anglers finding fish 6-8 inches using small jigs with wax worms or small plastics.

Lake Meyer

Water clarity is excellent. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers finding fish using small jigs with wax worms in 12-15 feet of water around brush piles. **Bluegill** - Good: Anglers finding success using small jigs with wax worms in 12-15 feet of water around brush piles.

Volga Lake

Water clarity is good with 5 inches of ice. Use extreme caution; check ice thickness often when going on ice first. **Black Crappie** – Good: Use a small jig tipped with wax worms and around brush piles. **Bluegill** – Good: Use wax worms on a small jig around brush piles.

Most area rivers and streams are low with ice along the edges or on pools. Majority of lakes and ponds covered with 5 to 9 inches of ice. Snow forecasted for Friday. 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. Temperatures are predicted in the mid to upper 40s for Christmas week providing for some good insect hatches.

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 8.3 feet at Lansing and is predicted to remain stable next week. Ice is 6+ 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** - Good: 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 614.4 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 7 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. 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 6-7 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** - Fair: 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** - Slow: Fishing in the tailwaters has been good; access may be limited by ice. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Some good reports of perch catches at Mud and Sunfish lakes.

Ice fishing on backwaters is in full swing on the Upper Mississippi River Pool 9-11. Freezing temperatures is building ice in backwater lakes. There is now 2-3 inches of snow cover over the ice. Warmer temperatures over the holiday weekend may weaken the ice. Avoid areas with current. Anglers should use a spud bar to test the ice prior to venturing onto the ice.

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 34 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: Lots of small pike have been caught in the river and pike should be available for tip up fishing if we get quality ice. **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 5.9 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 34 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Boat ramps remain open at Bellevue City Ramp but DNR boat ramp has mostly been frozen in. Some ice flow have occurred periodically. **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 5.1 feet at Fulton, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 4.7 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 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 5.3 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 has risen to 5.45 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. On December 19th the Marquette St. Boat ramp is free of ice. Ramp conditions may change. Unsafe ice conditions. Credit Island has areas of open water. **Sauger** - Fair: Some fish are being caught below the dam. It has been a hit or miss bite with mostly smaller fish being caught. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: 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 has risen to 4.21 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Tailwater stage is forecast to stay fairly steady. As of December 19th the boat ramp in Muscatine is free of ice and a boat dock is in the water. There has been some boats out walleye and sauger fishing. Unsafe ice conditions. **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 4.54 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater stage has risen close to 2 feet since last weekend. Tailwater state is forecast to stay fairly steady. 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 2.08 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. Tailwater stage has risen close to 1.5 feet since last weekend. There hasn't been much for walleye and sauger fishing below the dam yet. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool.

Tailwater stages have risen since this past weekend but are forecast to stay fairly steady. Main channel temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing but ramp conditions may change. Unsafe ice conditions. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice. Skimmed over but chewed up by the freezing rain.

[Big Hollow Lake](#) Unsafe Skim Ice to a little thicker and with the trees sticking out of the water. **Very UNSAFE.**

[Lake Darling](#)

Unsafe ice. Lake did get a chance to refreeze but the freezing rain make what did form very weak. One inch thick honeycomb ice. Some areas of surface water. Unknown if open water or not.

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

Still finding liquid water on top of the ice. The ice which wasn't a couple of inches thick at best really got chewed up by the rain.

[Lake Geode](#)

Skim ice and open patches. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Skim ice to maybe just over an inch in areas, some of water next to shore is thicker but looks honeycombed with the sleet/rain. **Unsafe ice.**

[Rodgers Park Lake](#)

Ice reported as 4-5" but use caution as ice may not be uniform across the lake.

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

The Skunk froze back over in chunks but along the edge is very thin to open water.

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

[Central Park Lake](#)

5-7 inches of ice were reported early in the week. Caution should still be used if venturing out.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake has skimmed over with ice but the channel is now ripping open again.

[Diamond Lake](#)

Most of the lake is skimmed over with ice but there are some open areas as well.

[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 but there is still open water on the main lake. Some parts East of the causeway has had up to 5 inches but weather conditions have been poor for ice. Ice fishing is still not recommended.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

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

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Most of the lake skimmed over but there are some open areas as well.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Some areas have 4-6 inches while there is open water near the west boat ramp yet. An aeration system will be running at the south end of the lake eventually.

There is very little safe ice south of Highway 30 at this time. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

The lake is skimmed over with ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[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](#)

The lake is skimmed over with thin ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[Lake Sugema](#)

The lake is skimmed over in the bays while the main area of the lake remains open due to goose activity. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[Lake Wapello](#)

The lake is skimmed over with ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.08 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 33 degrees. The coves and bays have skim ice and the majority of the main lake is open water. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

[Red Haw Lake](#)

The lake is skimmed over with ice. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

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

[Big Creek Lake](#)

As of December 18, Big Creek Lake had thin ice and large areas of open water.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

As of December 18, Don Williams Lake was completely ice covered with ice less than 3 inches thick.

[Lake Petocka](#)

On December 18th, Lake Petocka is completely 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](#)

On December 18, Terra Lake is 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](#)

On December 18, Triumph ponds are 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.

As of December 18, larger lakes in Central Iowa range from open water areas to thin ice. Ponds in Central Iowa are mostly covered in thin ice. Anglers beginning to ice fish on ponds should 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](#)

Lake is mostly ice covered. Large areas of open water around the beach as of 12/17.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Lake level is 11 feet below normal pool. Boat ramp lanes are out of the water at the main boat ramp. Lake is mostly ice covered with pockets of open water on the southern end of the lake.

[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 mostly covered with ice with pockets of open water. Ice is not thick enough for fishing. 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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