

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



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NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Ice thickness is 3 inches off the boat ramp, with thinner spots out the middle.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 5-6 inches off of Ice House Point boat ramp. This is the best ice on the lake - other areas are much thinner or open water. There are large areas in the main basins that are thin or open. 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 and in the inlet bridge bay area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness is 3 inches near the boat ramp. Expect conditions to deteriorate by the weekend with warmer temperatures expected.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

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

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

A few anglers are making their way out. The lake is mostly covered with ice. Thickness is 1 to 8 inches. Conditions are still really variable with some open water area. The best ice is in areas near shore. Recently open areas have just frozen over with thin ice; check ice thickness often as you move. **Yellow Bass** - Fair.

Most area lakes are covered in 1 to 8 inches of ice. Expect ice thickness to lessen throughout the week with warmer weather predicted for the next few days. Some lakes have pockets of open water. Check ice thickness often. 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. **Black Crappie** - Good: Try near the rushes on the north shore. **Bluegill** - Good: 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. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait.

Lake Smith

Ice thickness is 6 to 7 inches. Avoid areas around the aerator hole. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with waxworms. **Bluegill** – Fair.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is highly variable. There are several areas of open water. Check ice thickness often as you 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 covered with around 9 inches of ice in most areas. **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 covered with around 9.5 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Lake is fully 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 9 inches of ice; there are thinner areas 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

Most areas are now fishable by foot; there are still many unsafe areas out on the main

lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Most area lakes have 8.5 or more inches of ice; many larger lakes have thinner areas that have frozen over more recently. Recent snows have covered some of these recently frozen areas, making it difficult to differentiate. Check ice thickness 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. Water clarity is excellent. Find fish in deeper pools above beaver dams. **Brown Trout** - Good: Be stealthy approaching streams due to clear water. Flip a fly along the edge of vegetation. Try flies imitating minnows or other small fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use a small chunk of worm or cheese under a bobber fished through a deeper hole.

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is 8 to 9 inches. Water clarity is good. Avoid the area around the aerator. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are finding 6- to 8-inch crappie with small jigs with waxworms or small plastic. **Bluegill** – Good: Try small jigs with waxworms or small plastics.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is 6-7 inches. Water clarity is excellent. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use small jigs with waxworms in 12-15 feet of water around brush piles. **Bluegill** - Good: Try small jigs with waxworms in 12-15 feet of water around brush piles.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is 5 inches. Water clarity is good. Use extreme caution; check ice thickness often. **Black Crappie** – Good: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms and around brush piles. **Bluegill** – Good: Try waxworms on a small jig around brush piles.

Most area rivers are low with ice along the edges or on pools. Majority of lakes and ponds are covered with 5 to 9 inches of ice. Rain forecast for Friday. Temperatures rising through the weekend with high in the 40s and lows in the 30s. Always use caution on the ice. Late muzzleloader deer season opens on Dec. 23 and will continue through Jan. 10. Use caution and wear orange when fishing on public hunting areas. 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. **Walleye** - Fair: Tip a jig and plastic with a live minnow.

George Wyth Lake

Ice thickness is around 5 inches. Anglers are catching panfish. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

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. Reports of anglers catching some walleye. A few reports of ice fishing in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Temperatures are predicted above freezing this coming week; use extreme caution when on the ice. 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 falling to 8.1 feet at Lansing. Ice thickness is 6-7 inches in Shore Slough and Lansing Village Creek. Warmer weather may create poor ice conditions. **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** - Good: Look for perch in the backwaters. Try using minnows for bigger fish.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is falling to 613.8 feet at Lynxville. Warmer weather may create poor ice conditions. **Avoid ice at the ramp in Bussey Lake; unsafe ice conditions at Guttenberg.** Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting around 7-8 inches of ice. Crossing Johnson Slough at Sny Magill is not recommended with the warm-up. **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** - Good: Look for perch in the backwaters. Try using minnows for bigger fish.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is falling to 5.5 feet at Guttenberg. Ice thickness is around 6-7 inches in protected backwaters. Ice chunks are floating at the boat ramps in Guttenberg; expect ice flows to collect below the dam. 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. **Northern Pike** - Good: Early tip-up fishing has been good at times. **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 Pools 9-11. Falling water levels and warmer weather may cause water on top of ice and deteriorate the edges. Avoid areas with current. Use a spud bar to test the ice thickness before venturing out.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is stable at 5.7 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. Some ice reported at Hawthorne boat ramp, but boaters can get out to tailwater. **Bluegill** - Good: Some ice fishing is occurring; ice conditions are variable. Use caution and review [ice safety tips](#). **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Pike fishing has been very good in the backwaters when good ice has been present.

Anglers are using large shiners with tip-ups. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleye and saugers are being taken with a jig and minnow in the tailwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is steady at near 5.9 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 34 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Bellevue City Ramp is open; DNR boat ramp has been periodically frozen in. Some ice flow have occurred periodically. **Bluegill** - Good: 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: Some yellow perch are being reported by anglers targeting bluegills. Ice conditions are variable; use caution.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is stable at near 5.0 feet at Fulton, 9.7 feet at Camanche and 4.6 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Icing is an issue at the boat ramps; most anglers can get out to tailwaters. **Bluegill** -No Report: Ice fishing is occurring; ice conditions are variable. **Walleye** - Fair: Most tailwater anglers are using some sort of minnow rig.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is steady at near 5.4 feet at Rock Island. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees.

Conditions on the river are 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 5.38 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. 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. Bite is hit-or-miss 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. Mostly smaller fish are being caught.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 4.09 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Tailwater stage is forecast to stay fairly steady. The boat ramp in Muscatine is free of ice and a boat dock is in the water. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Slow: Try jigs and a minnow below the dam or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigs and a minnow below the dam or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 4.36 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. 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 2.03 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. 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 been fairly steady this past weekend. Main channel temperature is around 33 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing; ramp conditions

may change. Walleye and sauger fishing below the Locks and Dams is hit-or-miss. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Skim Ice to a little thicker with the trees sticking out of the water.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Warm weather this last weekend has added a thin layer of water on top; warm weather forecast for this week won't be making more ice.

[Lake Darling](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. The middle of the lake finally skinned over; there is lwater on top and some open water along the north shoreline.

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

Most ponds have water on top of the thin ice; most have opened back up along the north shoreline when not in the shade.

[Lake Geode](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Skim ice and open patches.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Skim ice to maybe just over an inch in areas; some of ice next to shore is thicker.

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

The Skunk River is wide open again after this last weekend.

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

[Central Park Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 5-7 inches. Use caution should if venturing out.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

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

[Diamond Lake](#)

Most of the lake is skimmed over with ice; there are some open areas.

[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.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Most of the lake skimmed over; there is still open water on the main lake. Some parts east of

the causeway has had up to 5 inches; weather conditions have been poor for ice. **Ice fishing is 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; there are some open areas.

[Rodgers Park Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 4 to 5 inches; use caution, ice may not be uniform across the lake.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 4-6 inches in some areas; there is open water near the west boat ramp. An aeration system will be running at the south end of the lake eventually.

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

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

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

[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](#)

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

[Lake Sugema](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. The lake is skimmed over in the bays; geese are keeping the main area of the lake open.

[Lake Wapello](#)

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

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.07 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. **Unsafe ice conditions.** The coves and bays have skim ice; the majority of the main lake is open water. Water temperature is 33 degrees. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

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

Skim ice is forming along the lake edges and in coves. **Unsafe ice conditions;** ice is not thick enough to support anglers. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Big Creek Lake](#)

Big Creek Lake has thin ice.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 4 inches near the boat ramp.

[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 a waxworm. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Terra Lake](#)

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 a waxworm. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Triumph Park West](#)

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 a waxworm. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Larger lakes in Central Iowa range from open water areas to thin ice. Ponds in Central Iowa are mostly frozen. Anglers are starting to ice fish on ponds; check ice thickness frequently. Warm temperatures and rain in the forecast will likely deteriorate ice quickly. 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.

There are no lakes safe for ice fishing. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[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.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes are mostly covered with ice with pockets of open water. Warm weather forecast this week will likely reopen the lakes. Most docks have been removed from lakes for the winter. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



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](#).