

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers Paddlefish Season | Tags on Sale Now – Jan. 7

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 5 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 thin ice areas in the main basins that are now covered in several inches of snow; use caution. 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 or jigs. Most luck has been around the fish house in Town Bay and near Ice House Point. **Walleye** - Fair: 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.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Ice fishing is not recommended.

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

The lake is mostly covered with ice, but there are pockets of open water. Conditions are more uncertain with the recent snow cover. Use caution if venturing out. The best ice is in areas near shore. Recently open areas may have just frozen over with thin ice.

Ice is variable on area lakes. Some lakes have pockets of open water and thin areas that are now covered in several inches of snow. Use caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 7 to 9 inches. There are areas that have frozen over recently with much thinner ice. Wear safety gear and check conditions as you go. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use caution when fishing near the rushes. **Bluegill** - Good: Use a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation. **Walleye** - Slow. Try a minnow near rocky habitat. Best bite is after sunset. **Yellow Bass** - Slow: Use 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 6 to 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait. **Bluegill** - Slow.

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. If you do venture out, check ice conditions as you go. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Slow. Use a jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 6 to 8 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Northern Pike** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: 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

Ice thickness is around 9 inches in most areas; there are a handful of open areas. **Black Crappie** - Good: **Bluegill** - Good: **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: **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)

Ice thickness is around 8.5 inches. **Walleye** - Good: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

Spirit Lake

The lake has safe ice for ice fishing, but also has a large open water section off Big Stoney Point. Some locations have up to 9 inches of ice, but 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: **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 or areas of open water on the main lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Most area lakes have 8.5 or more inches of ice; many larger lakes have areas of open water. 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. Running spinners through a deep hole will show good results as well.

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is 7 to 8 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 4-5 inches. Water clarity is excellent. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use small jigs with waxworms in 9-12 feet of water around brush piles. **Bluegill** - Good: Try small jigs with waxworms in 9-12 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. Ice conditions should improve as the colder weather moves in for these next couple of weeks. Always use caution on ice. Late muzzleloader deer season continues 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 4 inches. Anglers are catching panfish. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams are in excellent condition.

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 below freezing for the next ten days; should improve ice conditions. Trout streams remain in excellent condition and provide great angling opportunities for rainbow and brown trout. For more information, contact Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.4 feet at Lansing. Ice thickness is around 6 inches in Shore Slough and Lansing Village Creek. Warmer weather has created fluctuating ice conditions. Freezing weather should help improve ice conditions this week. **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 614.8 feet at Lynxville. Warmer weather over the holidays deteriorated the ice. Freezing temperatures should improve the ice conditions this week. **Avoid ice at the ramp in Bussey Lake; unsafe ice conditions at Guttenberg.** Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting around 6 inches of ice. Johnson Slough at Sny Magill is open water.

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 at 6.6 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. The spring at Zollicoffer has thin ice. **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.

Heavy ice flows are coming down below the Locks and Dams. Ice fishing on backwaters is in full swing on the Upper Mississippi River Pools 9-11. Fluctuating water levels may cause unsafe ice around the edge. Avoid areas with current. Use a spud bar to test the ice thickness before venturing out.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is receding to 6.2 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.9 feet at the RR bridge. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees in the main channel. Some ice flow reported at Hawthorne boat ramp, but boaters can get out to tailwater. Expect periodic ice flows in main channel. **Bluegill** - Good: Some ice fishing is occurring; ice conditions are variable. Use caution and review [ice safety tips](#). Anglers are targeting the various harbor sites within the city of Dubuque. **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** - Good: Some walleye and saugers are being taken with a jig and minnow in the tailwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is receding at near 6.6 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. At present it is open. Some ice flow have occurred periodically. Ice conditions are variable; use caution. **Bluegill** - Good: Some ice fishing conditions exist; review [ice safety tips](#) as ice depth is variable especially around the edges. **Walleye** - Good: Most angling is taking place in tailwaters using jigs and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Some yellow perch are being reported by anglers targeting bluegills.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is receding to near 6.0 feet at Fulton, 10.5 feet at Camanche and 5.2 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Ice flows have been reported, but generally boaters can get out to the main channel. **Bluegill** -No Report: Ice fishing is occurring; ice conditions are variable. Very little safe ice exists in Pool 14. **Walleye** - Good: Most tailwater anglers are using some sort of minnow rig.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is receding to near 6.9 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 the district; use caution. Often edge ice is very poor. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage has risen to 6.89 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 with colder temperatures and snow in the forecast. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Slow: 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** - Slow: 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 5.35 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. Ramp conditions may change with colder temperatures and snow in the forecast. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs and a minnow below the dam or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: Try jigs and a minnow below the dam or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 5.97 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston. Tailwater state is forecast to reach 6.3 feet over the weekend. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. Ramp conditions may change with the cold temperatures and snow in the forecast. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Fair: Try jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - Fair: Try 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. We have not received any reports for tailwater walleye and sauger fishing below the dam. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Tailwater stages have risen 1.5 to 2 feet since this past weekend. Main channel temperature is around 35 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger; ramp conditions may change with colder temperature in the forecast. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

The ice is starting over again after being open water for most of the week.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Earlier this week the lake was mostly ice-free. A calm cold night (1/1) let the ice start forming again. Just a skim layer of ice with some areas of open water still.

[Lake Darling](#)

The lake was nearly ice-free as of January 1. Most of the lake skimmed over last night (1/1), but there remains areas of open water.

Lake Darling District Farm Ponds

Most ponds were ice-free days before the lakes were finally frozen back over early this morning (1/2). Ice thickness is less than 1 inch.

[Lake Geode](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. Skim ice starting to form again; still open patches of water.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The west end of the lake has 3-4 inches of ice that had standing water on it earlier in the week. Expect less ice closer to the dam and on more wide open areas **Bluegill** - Fair. Anglers are catching some bluegills up towards the west boat ramp.

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

[Central Park Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

The lake was mostly open early in the week, but just skimmed over.

[Diamond Lake](#)

The lake just skimmed over with ice.

[Hannen Lake](#)

The lake just skimmed over with ice.

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

The lake just skimmed over with ice.

[Lake Macbride](#)

The lake was mostly open early in the week, but just skimmed over.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

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

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. An aeration system will be running at the south end of the lake

eventually.

Most lakes were open earlier this week and are just skimming over. 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 903.16 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 and large areas of open water.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 2 inches or less.

[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.

Ice fishing is not recommended. Larger lakes in Central Iowa range from open water areas to thin ice. Ponds in Central Iowa are covered in thin ice with some small open areas. 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.

Ice will start building next week with cold temperatures. Be safe and check ice often when venturing out. 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.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes are ice-free. Cold temperatures forecast over the next week should be good for building ice. Most docks have been removed 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](#).