

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



New requirement for Master Angler entries



All [Master Angler entries](#) must now include two photos:

1. photo of the angler with their fish
2. photo of the fish next to a ruler

Entries submitted without a length photo will be rejected.

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

- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 3-5 inches near the boat ramp. Areas in the middle of the lake may be thinner. Use caution and check conditions often as you move around.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 6 inches off of Ice House Point boat ramp. This is the best ice on the lake - other areas in the middle are much thinner as they were open and recently froze over. 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: The bite has slowed, but fish can still be picked up around Ice House Point boat ramp, near the Gunshot hill area, and in the inlet bridge bay area. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Anglers are picking up some perch with minnows and waxworms. Most are having luck between Denison Beach and Gunshot Hill area.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

Ice thickness is 4-5 inches near the boat ramp. Variable ice conditions with thinner areas near the middle; use caution.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

It is early for Brushy Creek Lake, but there are reports of 4-5 inches of ice near the north boat ramp where some anglers have been making their way out on foot only. Other areas of the lake are thinner or open water. Use caution if venturing out and check ice often as you move around (conditions on this lake are variable). **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish are being picked up by the north boat ramp. Best luck is near trees. Sorting is needed. **Bluegill** - Fair.

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

Most ice is between 6-9 inches thick. Conditions are variable, with the usual thin areas/open water around the big island and ice seams. Use caution and check ice thickness often as you make your way out. **Walleye** - Slow: Some fish are being picked up along the dredge cuts. Bite has been slow this last week. **Yellow Bass** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Ice is variable on area lakes. Ice thickness is 3-8 inches; some lakes have pockets of open water and thin areas that recently froze over. Use caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Blue Pit](#)

Rainbow trout will be stocked on Jan 11th. Mason City Parks & Recreation will host a family ice fishing event from 11:00am to 2:00pm. Wearing ice cleats is recommended. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Clear Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9-12 inches on most of the lake. There are several open water holes and areas that have frozen over recently with much thinner ice. Wear safety gear and check conditions as you go. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use caution when fishing near the rushes on the north shore. Foot traffic only recommended. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with bait near vegetation. **Walleye** -Fair: 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** - Good: Most perch being caught are 4- to 6-inches.

[Crystal Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 to 12 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** -Slow.

[Lake Cornelia](#)

Ice thickness is 7 to 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Yellow Perch** - Slow:

[Lower Pine Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 5 inches. Use caution around the Island.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is highly variable. There are several areas that have recently froze over. 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 10-12 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms near vegetation. **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 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](#)

The lake still has a handful of areas that have just frozen over recently, mainly on the northern

most basin. Ice thickness is around 11 inches in most 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 11.5 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 11 inches of ice, but there are areas that are thinner on the main basin that froze more recently. **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, but there are still many unsafe areas or areas of open water on the main lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Warning: Many larger lakes still have areas of open water or areas that have iced over very recently. Most area lakes have 10 or more inches of ice. The extended forecast calls for continued below freezing temperatures. 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. 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 9-11 inches. Water clarity is good. Avoid the area around the aerator; unsafe ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are finding around 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 10-12 inches. Water clarity is excellent. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use small jigs with waxworms in deeper water around brush piles. **Bluegill** - Good: Try small jigs with waxworms in 8-12 feet of water around brush piles.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is 8-9 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 where fish will be stacked up.

Most area rivers are low with ice along the edges or on pools. Ice thickness is 6-11 inches on the most lakes and ponds. Ice conditions have improved with the latest blast of cold weather and should continue to build up as the colder weather moves in the next week. Always use caution on ice. 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 on the Cedar River. **Walleye** - Fair: Tip a jig and plastic with a live minnow.

George Wyth Lake

Anglers are catching panfish. Ice thickness is around 4 inches. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair.

Manchester District Streams

Trout streams are in excellent condition.

Interior rivers remain at low levels and have frozen over with the recent cold snap. Few reports of ice fishing in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Ice conditions are improving daily with reports around most areas with 6 to 8 inches of good ice. Always use extreme caution 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 8.5 feet at Lansing. Ice thickness is around 6-7 inches in Shore Slough and Lansing Village Creek. Freezing weather has improved 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 614.6 feet at Lynxville. Freezing temperatures are improving the ice conditions. Anglers are fishing the newer dredge cuts above the Marquette bridge. **Avoid ice at the ramp in Bussey Lake; unsafe ice conditions at Guttenberg.** Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting around 6-7 inches of ice. Johnson Slough at Sny Magill is not safe to cross. **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** - Good: Anglers catching some nice bass fishing waxworms for panfish. **Northern Pike** - Good: 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 5.7 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.

Ice conditions are improving with colder weather. The bite has slowed this past week. Anglers having the best luck are moving often to find fish. Don't forget ice cleats; the ice is slippery

without snow cover. 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 stable at 5.9 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 8.3 feet at the RR bridge. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees in the main channel. Hawthorne boat ramp is covered with ice. Major ice flows were seen in the main channel. **Bluegill** - Good: Anglers are targeting the various harbor sites within the city of Dubuque. If you have airboats or hovercrafts several newly dredged backwater area like Stone Lake and Tippy Lake have been good. **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. Getting out of iced in ramps will be a challenge.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is stable at 6.3 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 34 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Bellevue City Ramp is open; ice chunks are in the bay. DNR ramp is frozen in. The main channel is open below the dam; major ice flows are occurring at times. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice conditions have become more favorable this week and a lot of fishing is going on especially in lakes around Sabula. Ice can be sketchy around the south campground; check ice thickness often before going out. The ice itself is very slick; use cleats to move around. **Walleye** - Good: Most angling is taking place in tailwaters using jigs and minnows. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Many little yellow perch with an occasional nicer fish being seen around the Sabula Lakes area.

Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level is stable at 5.0 feet at Fulton, 9.8 feet at Camanche and 4.4 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. **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. Getting out the boat ramps might be a challenge with ice cover.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is stable at near 5.7 feet at Rock Island. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 34 degrees.

Ice fishing conditions have improved dramatically; use cautions. Ice has been slick; wear cleats to help you move around. Ice depth is variable. Some tailwater boat angling has taken place; ramps are becoming closed with ice. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage has risen to 5.67 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. Tailwater state is forecast to stay fairly steady over the weekend. The Marquette St. Boat ramp is iced up; some flow ice is coming down the channel. We have not received any ice conditions for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 4.49 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. Tailwater stage is forecast to stay fairly steady. The boat ramp in Muscatine is frozen in; some skim ice is flowing down the channel. We have not received any ice conditions reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 5.32 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has risen close to 1.5 feet. On January 8, the Toolsboro ramp was ice-free; conditions may change daily with the cold temperatures. We have not received any ice conditions reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 2.74 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has risen close to 1.5 feet. We have not received any reports for tailwater walleye and sauger fishing below the dam. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool this week.

Tailwater stages have been on the rise. Main channel temperature is around 32 degrees. The main channel is freezing up with recent cold temperatures. We have not received any ice condition reports this week. Tailwater stages are fluctuating which could create unsafe ice conditions, especially along the shorelines. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

The lake is making ice; most ice is still pretty thin. Find the thickest ice at the boat ramp bay. Nearly everywhere else is much thinner.

Lake Belva Deer

Unsafe ice conditions. Due to the winds lately, Belva Deer has pockets of open water. Icd

thickness was 4 inches on parts of the shoreline, but not far out was only 3 inches and a little farther out was much less or open water.

Lake Darling

Use extreme caution. Ice thickness is about 4 inches on the campground arm of the lake and most of the rest of the shoreline. The areas of really clear ice out towards the middle are not that thick, nobody has tested those yet. **Bluegill** - No report: First anglers out on the ice was yesterday (1/8) on the campground arm of the lake. He didn't stay long.

Lake Geode

Unsafe ice conditions. Ice is forming, but is less than 3 inches in most parts of the lake.

Lake of the Hills

Thin ice; nobody had been out on the ice. Use extreme caution; check ice thickness often.

Lost Grove Lake

Most anglers are sticking to the west end of the lake. The ice up at that end is pretty decent, but it is also where the ice is thickest. Further down the lake is much thinner **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

Ice thickness is about 5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Good. **Largemouth** - Good.

Coralville Reservoir

Ice is variable. Pockets may have fishable ice, but the channel may be dangerous.

Diamond Lake

The lake is ice covered; thicknesses are unknown. Use caution if venturing out.

Hannen Lake

Ice thickness is 4-5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: 8- to 9-inch crappie are being caught. **Bluegill** - Fair: 5- to 7-inch bluegill are being caught.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Ice thickness is 5-6 inches on most of the lake; some snow covered areas have 3 inches. Use caution and check thicknesses as you go.

Lake Macbride

Ice thickness is 2-5 inches. Ice thickness is variable, depending on how protected it is and when it froze. There is still some open water by the dam.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

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

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 4-6 inches on most of the lake.

[Union Grove Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 3-6 inches. A small open area is still out there; use caution. An aeration system will be running at the south end of the lake eventually.

Most lakes just froze up this week. 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 903.14 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. **Unsafe ice conditions.** The coves and bays have skim ice. There was open water yesterday. 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.

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

Anglers are starting to ice fish on Big Creek Lake. Ice thickness is 5-7 inches. Use caution; areas of open water just froze up.

Don Williams Lake

Ice thickness is around 6 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappies in the lake afternoons and evenings on glow jigs with waxworms or glow spoons with live minnows or minnow heads.

Hickory Grove Lake

Ice fishing is occurring. Around the beach and island areas were the last areas to refreeze. Use caution; check ice thickness often if accessing the lake from the north boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch bluegill on waxworms throughout much of the lake over wood and rock habitat that was added.

Lake Petocka

Waterfowl were keeping an area open near the center of the lake. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try 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

Rainbow Trout - Slow: Try 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

Bluegill - Good: Use waxworms. Start by fishing where bottom depths are 6 to 12 feet.

Rainbow Trout - Good: Try 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 thickness is 4-7 inches on larger lakes in Central Iowa. Ponds in Central Iowa have 5-8 inches. Some community ponds in urban areas may have some open water or thin ice due to waterfowl keeping them open. 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 thickness is 6 inches. The panfish population looks good heading into winter. **Black Crappie** - Good: Sorting is necessary for larger fish. **Bluegill** - Slow.

[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](#)

Ice thickness is 6 inches. Bluegill average 8-inches and there is a good population of 9-inch black crappies. Find a deep cedar tree pile for best success. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** -Good: Catch 8-inch bluegill around cedar tree piles .

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 inches. No fishing reports at this time.

[Viking Lake](#)

Viking Lake will offer good crappie fishing this winter. Bluegills will average 7.5-inches.

Ice thickness is 4-6 inches in the southwest district. 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.

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 5 inches of ice off the beach area boat ramp. Geese are keeping an area open near the campground.

[Summit Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6 inches of ice off the main boat ramp. Avoid thin ice near the HWY 25 bridge.

[Three Mile Lake](#)

Open water across the south end of the 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](#)

Variable ice conditions; 6 inches of ice off of the east boat ramp. Areas of open water on the south end of the lake.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions; ice thickness is 0 to 6 inches. Some areas of the larger lakes are open. Use caution and drill test holes often. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.



Iowa DNR and Wildlife Forever encourages all Iowans ages 5-18 to enter the Iowa Fish Art Contest! Winning submissions will be featured in the DNR building at the 2025 Iowa State Fair.

The art must include one or more of the following fish species: Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Brook Trout, Walleye, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Bluegill, Crappie, Iowa Darter and/or Muskellunge.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 28, 2025. Only digital submissions are accepted - one entry per person: [individual form](#) or [group form](#).