

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



**Freeze time
with your favorite
fishing buddy.**



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.

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

- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness was 10 inches near the boat ramp. Areas in the middle of the lake may be thinner. Use caution and check ice thickness often as you move around.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The aeration system in Town Bay is operating. Expect thin ice and open water in Town Bay. Ice thickness is 10-12 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 a large seam near the middle of the lake. There is open water fishing at the fish house in Town Bay - area underneath the structure is kept ice free. **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: Fish can 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.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Anglers have been out on the north end. Foot traffic only. Other areas of the lake are thinner or have pockets of open water. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often as you move around (ice conditions on this lake are variable). **Black Crappie** - Fair: Pick up crappie by the north boat ramp. Best luck is near trees. Sorting is needed. **Bluegill** - Fair.

[Moorland Pond](#)

The DNR will stock rainbow trout at noon on Jan 24. Anglers need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10. Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but together, they can only keep one daily limit. Children can pay the trout fee, allowing them to keep their own daily limit.

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

Ice thickness is 10-13 inches. Conditions are variable, with the usual thin areas/open water around the big island and ice seams. Use caution; check ice thickness often as you make your way out. **Walleye** - Slow: Some fish are being picked up along the dredge cuts. **Yellow Bass** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair. Most perch being caught are small.

Ice is variable on area lakes. Ice thickness is 8-14 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 were stocked on Jan 11th. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 14-15 inches on most of the lake. Wear safety gear and check ice thickness as you go. **Black Crappie** - Good: Use caution when fishing near the rushes on the north shore. **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 14-15 inches with open water on the southeast side. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with bait. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** -Slow.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 14-15 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Walleye** - Slow. Best bite around sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good. Use a jig tipped with bait near vegetation.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Ice thickness is 14-15 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms near vegetation. **Northern Pike** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try a jig tipped with bait in 2 to 3 feet of water.

Aeration systems are running at 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

Okoboji Winter Games occur this weekend so expect heavy traffic. Ice thickness is around 14 inches in most areas. A handful of areas have just frozen over recently, mainly on the northern most basin. **Black Crappie** - Good: **Bluegill** - Good: **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: **Yellow Perch** - Good: Many perch seen; sorting most likely needed.

Ingham Lake

Caution: There is a large open hole just north of the island. Ice thickness is around 14.5 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Caution: The lake aerator is in operation. Ice thickness is around 15.5 inches. **Walleye** - Good: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

Spirit Lake

Okoboji Winter Games are taking place tis weekend so expect heavy traffic. The lake has safe ice for fishing, but also has a large open water section off Big Stoney Point. Ice thickness is up to 14 inches in some location; there are thinner areas on the main basin that froze more recently. There is no access on the south end due to a large heave. **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

Okoboji Winter Games are taking place the weekend of the 25th so expect heavy traffic. Most places have 14 inches of ice or more, 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 have areas of open water or areas that have iced over very recently. Be cautious of seams that have popped up on many lakes. Most area lakes have 15 or more inches of ice. The forecast calls for continued below freezing temperatures. Check ice thickness often when going out. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Lake Hendricks

Ice thickness is 13-14 inches. Due to extreme cold, few anglers out this week. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try small jigs with waxworms or small plastics in deeper water.

Lake Meyer

Ice thickness is 16 inches with a dusting of snow. Few anglers out this week. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try small jigs with waxworms or spike in deeper water around brush piles.

Volga Lake

Ice thickness is about 13-14 inches. Few anglers out this week.

Most area rivers are low and mostly ice covered. Ice thickness is 14-16 inches on majority of lakes and ponds. A cloudy weekend with highs in upper 20s and single digit lows. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Big Woods Lake](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie; some sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try locating structure and use an ice jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm; look for suspended fish near the structure using electronics. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try finding structure; use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm off of the bottom.

[Brinker Lake](#)

There have been fair to good reports of anglers catching yellow bass and crappies in Brinker Lake. **Black Crappie** - Good: Locate structure with electronics using a small jig tipped with a waxworm or dead-stick with live minnow for some good action. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Find woody structure in the 30 feet of water using a small jig tipped with a waxworm.

[Cedar River \(above Nashua\)](#)

About 14 inches of ice on impoundments. Use care when approaching ice heaves. Check depths often especially in areas with current. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use small jig tipped with minnow or waxworm near woody debris. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jig tipped with waxworm or spike near structure or in backwater. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Use dead chubs fished in areas with dead submersed vegetation or other debris. **Walleye** - Slow: Use minnows on small jig fished near bottom just out of current.

[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 bluegill and crappie, sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Try locating structure and use an ice jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm; look for suspended fish near the structure using electronics. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try finding structure; use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm off of the bottom.

[Manchester District Streams](#)

Trout streams are in excellent condition.

[South Prairie Lake](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie; some sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try locating structure and use an ice jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm; look for suspended

fish near the structure using electronics. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try finding structure; use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm off of the bottom.

Interior rivers remain at low levels and have frozen over with the recent cold snap. Walleye fishing had been good prior to the cold weather. Few reports of ice fishing in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Ice conditions are improving daily; ice thickness is 6-8 inches in most areas. 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 7.9 feet at Lansing. Freezing weather has improved ice conditions. Ice thickness is around 15 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 later afternoon bite. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Anglers are catching nice bass with waxworms **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Still lots of northern being caught on tip-ups in backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Look for perch in the backwaters. Try using minnows for bigger fish.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is at 4.8 feet at Guttenberg. Ice thickness is 15 inches in protected backwaters. Boat ramps in Guttenberg have iced in. Avoid ice in areas with any 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: Some sorting but still some decent bluegills being caught later afternoon bite. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Anglers catching some nice bass fishing waxworms for panfish. **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Still lots of northern caught on tip-ups in backwaters. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Some good reports of perch catches at Mud and Sunfish lakes.

Ice is building on backwaters with the cold weather streak. Ice thickness is around 15+ inches with light snow cover on most backwater lakes. Fluctuating water levels may cause unsafe ice around the edge. Avoid areas with current. Main channel ramps have refrozen.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water level is stable at 5.2 feet at Dubuque Lock and Dam and 7.8 feet at the RR bridge. Water

is clear. Water temperature is around 33 degrees in the main channel. Hawthorne boat ramp is iced in. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are often using tip-downs with a minnow for bait. **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. Anglers are using large shiners with tip-ups.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water level is stable at 5.1 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Bellevue City Ramp can be open at times, but subject to freezing and large ice chunks. The 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** - No report, very little angling occurring due to cold and ice at boat ramps. **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 4.7 feet at Fulton, 9.5 feet at Camanche and 4.4 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. **Bluegill** -Good: Ice fishing is occurring at Rock Creek and in Willow Lake. Sorting of bluegills is occurring but some nice fish are being caught. **Walleye** - No report: All boat ramps in Clinton are iced in.

Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level is stable at near 5.8 feet at Rock Island. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 33 degrees.

Ice fishing conditions are generally good in traditional areas; always use caution. Even in some traditional areas thin ice or even open water has been reported. Ice has been slick; wear cleats to help you move around. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 5.55 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities. Tailwater stage fluctuating this past week. Main channel and Marquette St. Boat ramp in Davenport are frozen. We have not received any ice conditions for this pool this week. Fluctuating river level could create unsafe ice especially along shore.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 4.20 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. The boat ramp and main channel in Muscatine are frozen up. We have not received any ice conditions reports for Big Timber this week.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 5.11 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and has been fluctuating this past week. Main channel and Toolsboro ramp are frozen up. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool this week.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 2.12 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. We have not received any fishing reports. We have not received any ice condition reports for this pool this week.

Tailwater stages have been fluctuating this past week. Main channel temperature is around 32 degrees. The main channel has frozen up with recent cold temperatures. 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

7-8 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fishing has been pretty hit and miss. Some are getting a limit and other not so much. Most are working edge of the trees along south side across from campground and down towards the dam.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Ten inches of ice reported. **Black Crappie** - Fair; **Bluegill** - Fair

Lake Belva Deer

Currently about 8 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Bite mostly at night. Some also caught very early morning and at last light. Daytime pretty slow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Most bluegills caught first thing in the morning, then slow.

Diamond Lake

Ice fishing activity reported on the lake. **Black Crappie** - Slow; **Bluegill** - Slow; **White Crappie** - Slow:

Lake Darling

After a few very cold days, Darling has about 8 inches of good ice. Geese and swans are keeping about 2 acres of open water just west of the middle of the lake. The last few days have seen very little angler activity. Expect increase with forecasted warmer weather..

Lost Grove Lake

Bluegill - Good. Most fishing pressure remains up at western end down from causeway but continue to spread down the lake. Most are sticking to outer edges of flooded timber close to deeper water.

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

Hannen Lake

Ice thickness is 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow; 8- to 10-inch crappie are being caught. Best time to fish sunrise and sunset. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish are 5-8 inches and best fished sunrise and sunset..

Lake Macbride

Ice thickness is 6-10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset. **Bluegill**- Slow: Fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset. **Walleye** -Slow: Fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset. **White Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset.

Pleasant Creek Lake

8-10 inches of ice reported. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fishing around brush piles at sunrise or sunset. **Bluegill**- Slow: Fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset. **Walleye** - Slow: Fishing around brush piles at sunrise and sunset.

Rodgers Park Lake

Ice thickness is 8 inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Fishing deeper water near dam.

Union Grove Lake

Ice thickness is 6-8 inches. Large open area near west boat ramp from waterfowl. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fishing reported as slow. **Bluegill** - Slow.

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

Hawthorn Lake

Ice conditions are variable with open water in some areas and 2-5 inches in others. Fishing activity has been slow with variable ice conditions. Use caution if venturing out.

Lake Keomah

Lake Keomah is drained for a lake restoration project. Please keep out of the lake bed.

Lake Miami

Ice conditions are variable with a pressure ridge developing on the east side creating some open water. Entering the lake from the west boat ramp is best. Catch crappies with jigs in brush piles.

Lake Sugema

The lake has quite a bit of open water; Canada geese are keeping areas open. No fishing activity has been occurring. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

Lake Wapello

Ice conditions vary; use caution.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.02 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Anglers are fishing in the coves and bay at South Fork, Buck Creek and Honey Creek. Ice thickness varies; use caution and be aware of pressure ridges in some areas. Catch crappies with jigs around brush piles. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody.

Red Haw Lake

Ice thickness varies; use caution. Target brush piles and the submerged structure near the campground hill.

Ice conditions vary at each lake; use caution and check ice thickness often. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

Big Creek Lake

Ice thickness is 11 inches. A band of open water that arcs from a couple hundred yards out from the marina to West Boat Ramp bay and back across lake to Ensign shelter. **Black Crappie** - Slow. No reports of a good crappie bite. A fair population of large crappies is present

if you can find schools. Try glow jigs and glow spoons tipped with live minnows, minnow heads or waxworms in the evening. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use waxworms and spikes near sunken trees.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Ice thickness is around 10 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 thickness is 10 inches. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch on waxworms throughout much of the lake. The best pattern has been a late afternoon into evening bite over the dead willow and cottonwood trees that grew while the lake was drained between Snow Bunting Lodge and South Boat Ramp at depths greater than 12 feet.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Trout were stocked through the ice on January 16. 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 - Good: Trout were stocked through the ice on January 16. 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: Trout were stocked through the ice on January 16 in both Triumph East and West Ponds. 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 10-11 inches on Central Iowa lakes and ponds. 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 10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Good: Sorting is needed for larger fish. Look for a deep tree pile for best success. **Bluegill** - Fair: A group of anglers did well in the south arm of the lake fishing in 10 feet of water around tree piles.

[Littlefield Lake](#)

10 inches of ice.

[Meadow Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 inches. Find a deep cedar tree pile for best success. **Black Crappie** -

Slow. Try fishing an hour before dark to find 10-inch black crappie. **Bluegill** -Fair: Catch 8-inch bluegill around cedar tree piles .

Prairie Rose Lake

Ice thickness is 10-12 inches. **Black Crappie** - No report: There is a fair population of 10- to 12-inch black crappie. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers are starting to catch bluegill around the cedar tree piles.

Viking Lake

Ice thickness varies from 7-10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are catching 9-inch black crappie in the campground arm of the lake. **Bluegill** - Good: Fishing is good for 7.5-inch bluegill.

Ice thickness is 7-10 inches on most lake and ponds. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

Ice thickness is 7 inches of ice off the beach area boat ramp. Geese are keeping an area open near the campground. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie up to 8- inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm near deep cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8-inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm near deep cedar tree brush piles.

Little River Watershed Lake

Ice thickness is 5-6 inches off the main boat ramp. Avoid thin ice near HWY 25 bridge. Geese are keeping an area of open water on the south end of the lake.

Summit Lake

Ice thickness is 7 inches of ice off the main boat ramp. Avoid thin ice near the HWY 25 bridge. Geese are keeping an area open about mid-lake.

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; ice thickness is 6 inches off of the east boat ramp. Areas of open water on the south end of the lake. Area of open water off the Townline Boat Ramp. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use jigs tipped with a waxworm in 15-20 feet of water along the flooded timber to catch all sizes of yellow perch.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions; ice thickness is 0 to 7 inches. Some larger lakes have areas of open water. 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](#).