

# Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



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## NORTHWEST

### [Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 7-8 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.

### [Bacon Creek Lake](#)

Rainbow trout were stocked 2 weeks ago. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Daily limit is 5 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. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use a small hook with a nightcrawler, corn, or powerbait trout bites under a small bobber. A small and shiny jig or spoon tipped with bait also works well.

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

The aeration system in Town Bay is operating. Expect thin ice and open water in Town Bay. Ice thickness is 8-9 inches off of Ice House Point boat ramp. This is the best ice on the lake - other areas in the middle may be thinner. There are open areas in the main part of the lake, use caution. There is open water fishing at the fish house in Town Bay. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a waxworm, small minnow, or jigs. Most luck has been around the fish house in Town Bay and near Ice House Point. **Walleye** - Fair: Pick up walleye 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 7 inches near the boat ramp. Conditions are variable.

### Brushy Creek Lake

Anglers have been out on the north end where ice thickness is 7-9 inches. Conditions are more variable elsewhere on the lake. Expect open areas and weak ice around protruding trees and other structure that absorb heat from the sun. 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. Sorting is needed. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### Moorland Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked 2 weeks ago. You 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. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try a small hook with a nightcrawler, corn, or powerbait trout bites under a small bobber. A small shiny jig or spoon tipped with bait also works well.

### Storm Lake (incl Little Storm Lake)

Ice thickness is around 10 inches. Conditions are variable, with the usual thin areas/open water around the big island and ice seams. The top several inches of ice have gotten weaker from the recent warmer temperatures. 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.

Ice thickness is 6-10 inches on most district lakes. Last week's warmer weather created more variable ice and open seams. Use caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 12-16 inches on most of the lake; there are several areas of open water and a few ice heaves. 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 waxworm in 2 to 3 feet of water near vegetation. **Walleye** - Fair: Try a minnow near rocky habitat. Best bite is early morning and near 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. Use a bigger bait to target the larger fish.

### Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 16-18 inches with open water on the southeast side. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with minnow near the dredge cut. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Walleye** - Slow.

### Eldred Sherwood Lake

Ice thickness is 12 to 14 inches. Avoid the area near the aerator. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with waxworms in 2 to 6 feet of water.

### Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 16-18 inches. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Walleye** - Slow. Best bite is around

sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a jig tipped with bait near vegetation. You may have to upsize your bait to avoid the small fish.

### [Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

Ice thickness is 16-18 inches. **Bluegill** – Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworms near vegetation. **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. 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.

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### [East Okoboji Lake](#)

Watch for a handful of areas that are open or have just frozen over recently, mainly on the northern most basin. Ice thickness is around 14 inches in most areas. **Black Crappie** - Good: **Bluegill** - Good: **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: **Yellow Perch** - Good: Many perch seen; sorting most likely needed.

### [Ingham Lake](#)

The lake is fully ice covered with around 15 inches. **Walleye** - Fair: Morning and afternoon bite is best.

### [Silver Lake \(Dickinson\)](#)

**Caution:** The lake aerator is in operation. Ice thickness is more than 15 inches. **Walleye** -Fair: Bite hit-or-miss, but very good when bite is on.

### [Spirit Lake](#)

The lake has ice thick enough for fishing, but also has a large open water section off Big Stoney Point. Ice thickness is more than 15 inches. **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](#)

Ice thickness is 14 inches or more in most areas, but there are still many unsafe areas or areas of open water on the main lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Most area lakes have 14 or more inches of ice, but many lakes have areas of open water that have persisted throughout the winter. Ice conditions should only continue to improve with forecasted temperatures well below freezing. [The Walleye season on the IGL's closes February 15th](#). For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

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## NORTHEAST

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

Ice thickness is about 14 inches on impoundments. Use care when approaching ice heaves. Check ice depths often, especially in areas with current. Ice conditions change quickly with warmer weather. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm in

deeper water with a little current. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm or spike near structure or in backwater area. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Use dead chubs fished in areas with dead submersed vegetation or other debris. **Walleye** - Slow: Try minnows on a small jig near bottom just out of current.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Don't forget to buy your [2025 fishing license and trout fee](#). Trout streams are in excellent condition, but low. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Use midge, minnow, or leach patterns for fish looking to get more bang for their effort. **Brown Trout** - Good: Try fishing around an undercut bank or similar structure. Cloudy days and off-color water are a perfect mix for catching this trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Rainbow trout spawn is on, showing brighter colors. Hatchery holdovers remain in the stream teasing anglers. Use a small spinnerbait or hair jig floated past or through deep bank or hole.

### [Lake Hendricks](#)

Ice thickness is 13-14 inches. Fish activity has slowed. Use care around the aerator. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try jigs with waxworms or spike in deeper water.

### [Lake Meyer](#)

Ice thickness is about 13 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing around 4-5 feet off the bottom near dark or early morning. **Bluegill** - Fair: Lots of lookers but some will take a small jigs tipped with waxworms or spike in deeper water near brush piles.

### [Volga Lake](#)

Ice thickness is about 13-14 inches. Few anglers out this week. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Find crappie around pallets or brush piles. Use small jig with some flash. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find gills around brush piles. Use small jigs tipped with a waxworm or spike.

Most area rivers are low and mostly ice covered. The majority of lakes and ponds lost a few inches of ice, but still have 12 inches. Ice conditions can change rapidly with warmer temperatures. Snow lightly Saturday. A cloudy weekend with highs in the upper 20s and single digits for lows. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### [Big Woods Lake](#)

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

### [Brinker Lake](#)

No reports for this week.

### [Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

Anglers are catching walleye on the Cedar River. **Walleye** - Fair: Tip a jig and plastic with a live minnow for best success.

### [George Wyth Lake](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie, sorting may be needed. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Find structure; use an ice jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm. Look for suspended fish near the

structure using electronics. **Bluegill** – Fair: Find structure; use an ice jig tipped with a waxworm off of the bottom.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Trout streams are in excellent condition.

Interior rivers remain at low levels and should provide some angling opportunities. Few reports of anglers catching some panfish in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area. Ice conditions remain around 6-8 inches of good ice on most area lakes. Always use extreme caution on the ice. Ice conditions should hold up well with below freezing temperatures forecast for the next ten days. For more information, contact Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276.

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## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

### **Mississippi River Pool 9**

Water level is 8 feet at Lansing. Recent cold weather has firmed up ice again. Ice thickness is around 15 inches in Shore Slough and Lansing Village Creek. **Black Crappie** - Fair:

Occasional nice-sized crappies are being caught. **Bluegill** - Good: Midwinter bite can be mixed with a lot of sorting of smaller fish. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up fishing has been good this winter with a lot of 20-inch fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

Water level is 613.5 feet in the tailwaters at Lynxville. Recent cold weather has firmed up ice. Anglers are fishing the dredge cuts above the Marquette bridge. **Avoid ice at Bussey Lake Ramp in Guttenberg ; unsafe ice conditions.** Ice anglers are entering on the island road and reporting around 12 inches of ice. Anglers have been crossing Sny Magill to Norwegian Lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Occasional nice-sized fish being caught. **Bluegill** - Good: Midwinter bite can be mixed with a lot of sorting of smaller fish. **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Tip-up fishing has been good this winter with a lot of 20-inch fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

### **Mississippi River Pool 11**

Water level is 5.0 feet at Guttenberg. Recent cold weather has firmed up ice again. Ice thickness is 12-15 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Occasional nice-sized fish being caught. **Bluegill** - Good: Midwinter bite can be mixed with a lot of sorting of smaller fish.

**Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up fishing has been good this winter with a lot of 20 inch fish being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

Most backwater lakes have 12-15+ inches of ice. Recent cold weather has firmed up ice; use caution around areas with current. Main channel ramps remain iced up.

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### **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. **Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are often using tip-downs with a minnow for bait. **Bluegill** - Excellent: 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. **Walleye** - No Report: Very difficult to get to the tailwater as boat ramps are iced in or subject to ice flows.

### **Mississippi River Pool 13**

Water level is stable at 5.3 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** - Excellent: Ice thickness is decent. Ice can be sketchy around the south campground in Sabula at times so please check it before going out. The ice itself is very slick so please use cleats to move around. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Lots of big bass have been reported by ice anglers in the Sabula area. **Northern Pike** - Excellent: Pike are being caught in a variety of locations on tips up tipped with larger shiners. May be the best pike fishing seen on the river in years. **Walleye** - No report: Some anglers are fishing in the tailwater at Bellevue and launching from the City ramp. Be wary of ice flows. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Many little yellow perch with an occasional nicer fish being seen around the Sabula Lakes area. Some perch also being caught at Millers Landing in lower Pool 13 in some very shallow backwaters.

### **Mississippi River Pool 14**

The water level is stable at 4.7 feet at Fulton, 9.6 feet at Camanche and 4.3 feet at LeClaire. Water is clear. Water temperature is around 33 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Ice fishing is occurring at Rock Creek and Cattail Lake. Sorting is needed; some nice fish are being caught. **Northern Pike** - Lots of pikes being caught in the pools above Pool 14 but would not be surprising that they could not be targeted here as well. Pool 14 has a very good pike population. **Walleye** - No report: All boat ramps in Clinton are iced in.

### **Mississippi River Pool 15**

The water level is stable at near 4.9 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. Thin ice or even open water has been reported in some traditional areas. Ice has been slick; wear cleats to help you move around. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

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## **SOUTHEAST**

### **Big Hollow Lake**

Rain and warm weather last weekend deteriorated the ice, especially around the edges. Use caution. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The south side remains the place to catch crappies; try along the inner edges of the flooded timber..

### **Lake Belva Deer**

Rain and warm weather last weekend melted away some of the edges of the ice, especially

anywhere near water enter the lake. Use caution when getting out on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: After dark bite is best; daytime bite is slow. **Bluegill** - Fair: Early morning is best.

### Lake Darling

Last Friday's rain along with the 50-60 degree air temperatures last weekend deteriorated ice conditions. A lot of ice around the edges melted, especially near the upper end. Use caution getting out onto the ice; the first couple of feet may be newly refrozen. The goose hole in the middle has also gotten much bigger. **Bluegill** - Fair: Recent weather has dropped the number of anglers going out on this ice. Nobody has gone anywhere near the middle of the lake by the goose hole.

### Lake Geode

Geese and swans are still keeping the middle of the lake wide open; avoid that area which continues to grow and get closer to the end of the main boat ramp. Use caution if that's where you access the ice. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers are picking up crappies over the habitat in 8 to 10 feet of water. **Bluegill** - Fair: Bite hit-and-miss. Work the fish habitat in 8 to 10 feet of water.

### Lost Grove Lake

Most anglers continue to hit the upper end just down from the causeway. **Bluegill** - Far. Last weekend's warm weather made it kind of wet out on the ice. Water opened up around some of the trees. Use caution and look for any weak spots.

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

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### Central Park Lake

Ice thickness is 6 inches. **Black Crappie** – Slow. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Largemouth Bass** – Fair. **Redear Sunfish** – Slow.

### Diamond Lake

No fishing activity reported. **Unsafe ice conditions.**

### Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

Ice thickness is 7-8 inches. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair.

### Lake Macbride

Reports of highly variable ice conditions throughout the lake. use extreme caution. **Black Crappie** - Fair. Try fishing the humps and brush piles in 10-15 feet of water. **Bluegill**- Fair. Try fishing around structure in 10-15 feet of water. **Walleye** -Slow. **White Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing around structures east of the causeway. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow.

### Rodgers Park Lake

Ice thickness is 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Redear Sunfish** - Slow.

### Union Grove Lake

Ice thickness is 4-8 inches. Large open area near west boat ramp from waterfowl. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow.

### Wapsi River (Troy Mills to Oxford Junction)

Final stage of dredging at the Pinicon Ridge Park has begun. Some areas will be closed to fishing. Closures are expected to last for about one month.

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

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### [Hawthorn Lake](#)

Ice conditions are thin with areas of open water along the shoreline.

### [Lake Keomah](#)

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

### [Lake Miami](#)

Ice conditions are not very good with areas of open water.

### [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 are thin with open water.

### [Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.23 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Ice thickness is not very good; there is open water around the shoreline and some areas in the main lake. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; [properly drain, clean and dry equipment](#) before transporting to another waterbody.

### [Red Haw Lake](#)

Ice thickness is thin with areas of open water.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing south central Iowa. **Thin ice conditions dominate most district waters; ice fishing is not recommended.**

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## **SOUTHWEST**

### [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 12 inches. Ice conditions held up well during the warmer weather. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout were stocked through the ice on January 30. Use jigging spoons or panfish jigs tipped with waxworms. Trout at Ada Hayden typically school within 20 to 30 yards from shore during ice cover. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Big Creek Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10-11 inches. Areas of open water have expanded. This band of open water 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: Try glow jigs with waxworms or glow spoons with live minnows or minnow heads late afternoon and evening.

### [Hickory Grove Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 9 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. The portion of the lake with most of this habitat is between the Snow Bunting Lodge and the South Boat Ramp at depths greater than 12 feet.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

As of February 5, ice conditions are supporting angling. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: 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** - Fair: 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 9-12 inches on Central Iowa lakes and ponds. Warm weather and rain have created some variability, especially south of Interstate 80. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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### [Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Rainbow trout were stocked on January 24th. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use flashy jigs, waxworms or minnows. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Lake Anita](#)

Open water around the beach. Ice thickness is 6 inches in the upper end of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Good: The bite has picked up around five in the afternoon. Sorting is needed for larger fish. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers fishing in 10 feet of water around tree piles are doing well.

### [Littlefield Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 10 inches.

### [Meadow Lake](#)

Meadow has open water in front of the boat ramp. Ice thickness is 5 inches in other areas. **Black Crappie** - Fair. 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 7 inches. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Move often to find 10- to 12-inch black crappies. **Bluegill** - Slow: Catch bluegill around the cedar tree piles.

### Viking Lake

Ice thickness is 4-8 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.

**Unsafe ice conditions in the southern part of the district.** Drill holes often when venturing out; never walk on black ice. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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### Green Valley Lake

Geese are keeping an area open near the campground which is expanding southward.

### Three Mile Lake

**Driving is prohibited on any service roads used to access the lakebed and the lakebed itself.** 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

Large area of open water off the Townline Boat Ramp and a couple areas of open water on the south end of the lake.

Ice conditions have deteriorated on Mount Ayr district lakes. Many farm ponds have opened up. Shorelines have deteriorated and areas of open water on the larger lakes have expanded in size. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

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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](#).