

Fishing News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



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

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 6-7 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 this winter. 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 7 inches off of Ice House Point boat ramp with 4 inches of snow cover. This is the best ice on the lake. There are many open water areas- 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: Try minnows and waxworms on a small jig. Most anglers are having luck between Denison Beach and Gunshot Hill area.

Black Hawk Pits

Ice thickness is 6 inches near the boat ramp. Conditions are variable.

Brushy Creek Lake

Anglers have been out on the north end. Conditions are more variable elsewhere on the lake with thin ice and open water to watch out for. Use caution if venturing out; check ice thickness often as you move around. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Pick up crappie on the north end in 20 plus feet of water. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Moorland Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked this winter. 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)

Most ice thickness is around 8-10 inches. Even with the recent cold weather, conditions are variable and there are still large open areas and seams to watch out for. 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 ice in the district is 5-9 inches and covered several inches of snow. Even with the recent cold weather, ice conditions have not improved and many lakes have open water pockets. Use caution if venturing out. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Aeration system are not operating, but watch out for bad ice conditions in the Channel, from Dodge's Point to the Island, and the east shore south of Outlet to Billy's Reef. Avoid any areas with pressure cracks due to unstable ice conditions. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Small jigs with insect larvae or small minnows are the best bait. Crappies are being caught near rush beds and across the western basin of the lake. **Walleye** - Good: Use jigging spoons tipped with a minnow or a live minnow below a bobber. Best bite is near sunset and after dark. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Bass are being caught on small spoons and jigs, especially near sunset.

Crystal Lake

Aeration system is operating near the boat ramp. Avoid crossing the pressure ridges that have developed variable ice conditions. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use small spoons and minnows in 10 to 16 feet of water. Crappie action has been sporadic with the best bite at sunset or just after dark. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jigs with insect larvae in the deeper dredge cuts.

Rice Lake

Winter aeration system is operating. Use caution if fishing in that area. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig with insect larvae especially near submersed vegetation. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Try small minnows jigs and spoons in 4 to 6 feet of water. A lot of sorting is needed for larger fish.

Silver Lake (Worth)

Aeration system is operating near the boat ramp area. Avoid areas with pressure ridges due to variable ice conditions. **Bluegill** – Fair: Nice-sized bluegill are available. Use a small jig and spoons tipped with waxworms. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with waxworms.

Ice conditions are variable across north central Iowa lakes. Avoid areas around pressure cracks, points, and reefs. 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 are open or have just frozen over recently, mostly on the northern most basin. Ice thickness is around 16 inches or more in most areas. **The Walleye season is closed. 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 17 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.

Spirit Lake

The lake has adequate ice for fishing, but also has a large open water section off Big Stoney Point. Ice thickness is more than 17 inches in most areas. **The Walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** - Good: Anglers are finding quality-size crappie up to 14-inches. **Bluegill** - Good. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Sorting is needed; anglers are finding many of acceptable size.

West Okoboji Lake

Ice thickness is 16 inches or more in most areas, but there are still many unsafe areas or areas of open water on the main lake. **The Walleye season is closed. Black Crappie** - Fair: **Bluegill** - Good.

Ice thickness is 14 inches or more on most area lakes, but many lakes have areas of open water that have persisted throughout the winter. **Permanent ice shelters must be removed from lakes and state property beginning February 20th unless occupied overnight. The Walleye season on the IGL's is closed until May 3rd.** For current conditions, call 712-330-2542.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Snow is covering about 12 inches of ice. Few anglers out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a small

jig tipped with a minnow or in backwater or in areas with no current. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small jig tipped with a waxworm under a bobber a few inches off the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Use a spoon or flashing jig in an off channel area. Set a tip-up out and sit quietly for a signal. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow in backwater. The bite is light, so be ready to set the hook.

Decorah District Streams

The [2025 Catchable trout stocking calendar](#) is now available. Catchable stocking season begins April 1. Start planning your getaway to beautiful northeast Iowa now. **Brook Trout** - Slow: 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 to catch this trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Hatchery holdovers remain in the stream teasing anglers. Use a small spinnerbait or hair jig floated past structure.

[Lake Hendricks](#)

Three inches of snow cover the ice. Ice thickness is about 16 inches. Avoid area around the aerator. Few anglers out this week. **Black Crappie**- Fair: Use a small jig tipped with a minnow or waxworm fished near the bottom. **Bluegill** – Fair: Try jigs with waxworms or spike about a foot off the bottom near brush piles.

[Lake Meyer](#)

Four inches of snow is covering about 20 inches of ice. Few anglers out this week. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish activity slowed with snow on top of ice.

[Volga Lake](#)

Three inches of snow is covering 12-13 inches of ice. Few anglers out this week. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Most area rivers are low and mostly ice covered. The majority of lakes and ponds still have 12 inches of ice covered with 1 to 3 inches of snow. Ice conditions can change rapidly with warmer temperatures. A cloudy weekend with highs in the upper 20s and teens for lows. For more information, contact the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Big Woods Lake](#)

No reports for this week.

[Brinker Lake](#)

Anglers are catching a few crappie. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use electronics to find structure and suspended fish in deep water.

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

There have been a few reports on the Cedar River this past week. A 12-pound walleye was checked in at an area bait shop.

[George Wyth Lake](#)

Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie, sorting may be needed. Use caution; geese are keeping an area open on the lake. **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. Next week's forecast calls for temperatures in the 40s which may trigger some hatches to occur.

South Prairie Lake

Anglers are catching a few quality-sized bluegill. **Bluegill** - Fair: Find structure; use a ice jig tipped with a waxworm off of the bottom.

Next week's forecast calls for temperatures in the 40s. Few reports of anglers catching 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. For more information, contact your local area bait and tackle shop for further information.

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 18 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** - Good: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 613.4 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 18 inches of ice. Anglers have been crossing Sny Magill to Norwegian Lake. **Black Crappie** - Good: 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** - Fair: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is 5.2 feet at Guttenberg. Recent cold weather has firmed up ice again. Ice thickness is 15-18 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** - Fair: Perch fishing should pick up during late winter.

Most backwater lakes have 15-18 inches of ice with snow cover. Recent subzero weather has firmed up ice; use caution with snow cover, especially in areas with current. Main channel ramps remain iced up.

[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 5.2 feet at Bellevue. Water temperature is 33 degrees in the main channel. Water is clear. Bellevue City Ramp and Iowa 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. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Lots of big bass have been reported by ice anglers in the Sabula area. May have tailed off recently. **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. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: The kids trout pond north of the DNR fisheries station is stocked with trout and should remain good fishing until April/May. Presently it is frozen over and nearly impossible to fish. It should open up again soon with warmer temperatures. **Walleye** - Good: The tailwater has been open most of the winter but presently it is frozen in with recent cold weather. **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. Typically late ice can be good for yellow perch.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is stable at 4.6 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 Cattail Slough. Sorting is needed; some nice fish are being caught. **Northern Pike** - No report: 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 5.5 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. If you have angling questions, call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

We have received no information regarding fishing on this water body this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is fairly steady at 4.07 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine. The boat ramps

in Muscatine are frozen in. Two weeks ago, Big Timber had open water along the boat ramp/parking lot. Ice conditions in Big Timber can be variable.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

We have received no information regarding fishing on this water body this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is rising slightly to 1.96 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington. We have not received any boat ramp reports or ice conditions reports for this pool.

Tailwater stages have risen some the past week. Boat ramps and the main channel are frozen back up with the recent cold weather. We have not received much for ice condition reports this week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Ice fishing not recommended. The thinner areas got a little thicker with the return of cold weather, but remain on the thinner side of being safe. Temperatures in the 40s next week will deteriorate the ice.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Ice fishing not recommended. The open water area got a little smaller, but not by much. Forecasted warmer weather next week will really open it up.

[Lake Darling](#)

Ice fishing not recommended; unsafe ice conditions. Despite the return of sub-zero weather, about 20 acres of open water remains. More areas have just refrozen, but aren't thick enough to walk on.

[Lake Geode](#)

Unsafe ice conditions. The return of cold weather did not change the status of the ice; still plenty of open water (just about half of the lower end of the lake) for the geese and swans.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The ice at Upper End (west) is still in decent shape. **Avoid the lower end of the lake.** **Bluegill** - Slow: Entering the "late ice" part of the season when the bite slows down. Use caution if venturing out, especially next week when it warms back up.

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

[Diamond Lake](#)

No ice condition report. **Black Crappie** -Slow **Bluegill** -Slow.

Lake Macbride

Several open water areas have refrozen with the colder weather. Use extreme care; checking ice depth regularly if walking on ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Pleasant Creek Lake Ice thickness is 8-9 inches in the good areas with several bad heaves with open water. Ice conditions near the dam are reported as poor. Very few anglers are out fishing; use extreme caution.

Rodgers Park Lake

ice thickness is 12-13 inches.

Union Grove Lake

Several open water areas have refroze with the colder temperatures; check ice thickness regularly if going fishing. **Black Crappie** - Slow. **Bluegill** -Slow.

Wapsipinicon 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.

Hawthorn Lake

Ice conditions vary; use caution.

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 and variable. Use caution along the east shorelines.

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 903.38 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; **properly drain, clean and dry equipment** before transporting to another waterbody. Ice thickness varies across the lake. There is open water in the main lake area. A few anglers have been doing some fishing in the back coves and bays but use caution.

Red Haw Lake

Ice conditions vary; use caution.

Ice conditions vary at each lake with open water at some areas. Use caution if going out. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake

Ice thickness is 10-11 inches. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Trout were stocked through the ice this winter. 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. There is a large area of open water mid-lake. This band of open water arcs from the marina to West Boat Ramp bay and back across lake to Ensign shelter. **Black Crappie** - Fair. 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 near brush piles in water deeper than 15 feet. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use waxworms and spikes near sunken trees.

Don Williams Lake

Ice thickness is around 11 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 6-10 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappies in the late afternoon into the evening on jigging spoons with live minnow or minnow heads or wax worms on golf jigs. Try fishing over cedar tree habitat or the submerged willow and cottonwood that grew while the lake was down. This growth is mostly found on the portion of the lake between the South Boat Ramp and Snow Bunting Lodge. **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

Ice conditions are supporting angling. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Trout were stocked through the ice this winter. 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 this winter. 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 this winter 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 6-11 inches on Central Iowa lakes and ponds. Ice is more variable 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.

Lake Anita

Open water around the beach. Ice is variable; ice thickness is 7 inches on most of the lake. Use caution. **Black Crappie** - Fair: 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

Variable ice conditions ranging from skim ice to 9 inches. The gates are closed to the park; you must access the lake from the north lot off the highway. **Black Crappie** - Good: Sorting is needed for 9-inch fish. **Bluegill** - Slow: A few bluegills are being caught near 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.

Area lakes have only gained an inch of ice with this cold weather. For information on lakes in the Southwest District, call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

Geese are keeping an area open near the campground which is expanding southward. **Bluegill** - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near deep cedar tree brush piles off the beach boat ramp.

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

Area of open water off the Townline Boat Ramp and south end of the lake have refroze, but may have thin ice. No reports on fishing this week.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions ranging from 0 to 6 inches. Areas of lakes that were open last week have refroze, but may have thin ice. Warm weather expected this weekend could deteriorate ice conditions. For more information, call Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-931-6031

Iowa DNR launches new website design

The Iowa DNR is pleased to announce the launch of a new design for its [website](#), providing a streamlined, user-friendly experience for visitors.

You can still find the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov. We invite you to explore the site and navigate through the menu to find relevant program information. While many prior web page URLs will be redirected to the new site, we recommend updating any links or bookmarks to specific DNR pages you and your audiences may use.

Thank you for visiting the DNR website, and if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the site changes, please email us at: webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov.