

February - Week 3

Lake and Pond Ice

Visit a local lake or pond and examine the ice that has formed and grown in thickness the past couple of months. In a typical winter the ice on a lake or pond may be covered with a two-foot layer of ice. You may notice cracks on the ice's surface or hear ice groan on cold days and nights as it continues to grow. In mid-February the warm winter sun may also be causing surface melting as the sun angle (sun declination) has increased by 12 degrees since the winter solstice.

If the ice conditions are not safe (possibly posted by local officials), observe safely from the shoreline. If ice conditions are good, step onto the ice and observe the ice's surface. Notice its color, texture, if there is snow on top measure the snow's thickness.

Are their tracks from people or other animals? If so, examine the tracks and trails. What do you think they may have been doing? Where were they going? Gather data and document in your journal. If you are ice fishing, or see someone ice fishing, you may measure the thickness of the ice in a hole drilled in the ice. View the ice colors and textures in the ice fishing hole if you have access to one. (The ice fishing season comes to an end next week in the southern 2/3 of Minnesota and in mid-March in the Northern 1/3 of the state.)



Cracks in ice can be strangely beautiful.