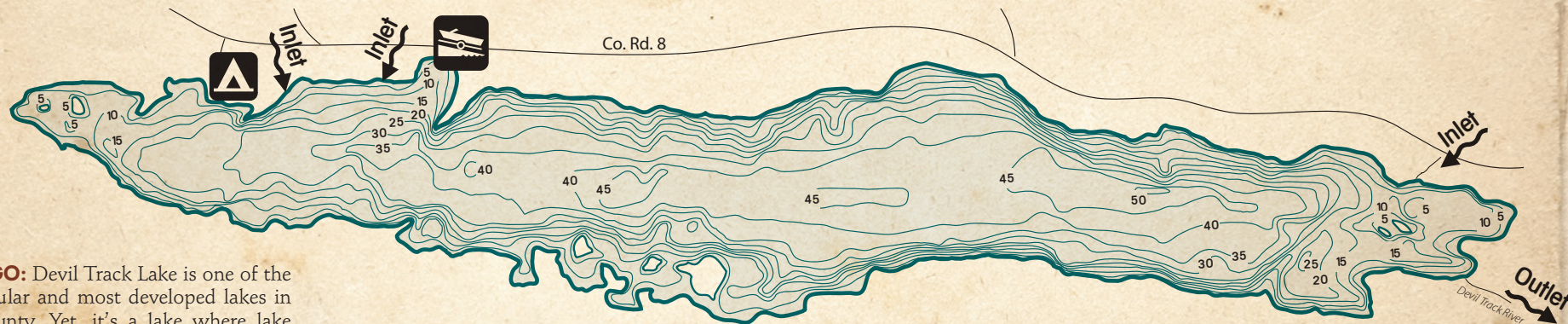


FISHING HOLE

DEVIL TRACK LAKE



WHY GO: Devil Track Lake is one of the most popular and most developed lakes in Cook County. Yet, it's a lake where lake whitefish have persisted. While DNR periodically needs to give the walleye population an assist with supplemental stockings, there is some natural reproduction on the lake. There's a pretty decent population of smaller walleye in the lake, too.

ACCESS: The U.S. Forest Service owns a public access and seaplane dock (not to be confused with the seaplane base), on the north shore of the lake. There's parking for 20 vehicles. The lot is on Hwy. 57.

VITALS: This 1,867.5-acre Cook County lake is north of Grand Marais. It has a maximum depth of 50 feet and water clarity down to 8.6 feet, according to Minnesota DNR's most recent 2012 survey of the lake.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye, northern pike, yellow perch, smallmouth bass and whitefish.

SUMMER 'EYES: Like so many other walleye lakes in Cook County, Devil Track is mostly an open-water walleye lake, not known much for a winter bite, but it's a decent place to wet a line. Though you are more likely to run into fish between 10 and 13 inches.

"We usually get a few fish between the 25- and 30-inch mark," said Matt Weberg, DNR's Grand Marais area assistant fisheries manager.

DNR has a schedule to assess the walleye hatch frequently, and when the number of young-of-the-year walleyes falls below a certain level, DNR responds with a supplemental stocking. In the past 10 years, the lake was stocked in 2013, 2011 and 2006.

But some years, walleyes reproduce naturally—years such as last—when the number of young walleye exceeded that mark. DNR won't assess this year's hatch, but will likely take another look next year. "We don't want to stock walleyes on top of walleyes," he said.

NORTHERN PIKE: The lake has some northerns in it, though it isn't particularly known for many trophy-sized pike, Weberg said. Recent surveys have showed average numbers of small- to medium-sized pike, with a majority falling between 20 and 30 inches. The lake maintains a cool water habitat during the summer months, a key component to growing trophy pike. While there remains a small chance at one of these fish, it has given up a few fish of 10 pounds or heavier in the past.

SMALLMOUTH BASS: Smallmouth bass have become more of a fishery on the lake, since they were first discovered in the lake in the late 1970s. The most recent survey showed the highest catch rate of smallies to date, with most fish longer than 12-inches.

OTHER SPECIES: Devil Track has held onto its whitefish population, and a small group of anglers continue to fish for them during the fall netting season, Weberg said.

There's also a sizeable yellow perch population in the lake. Those fish are main forage in the lake, though few of these fish get to the size where they'd be of much interest to anglers. — Javier Serna