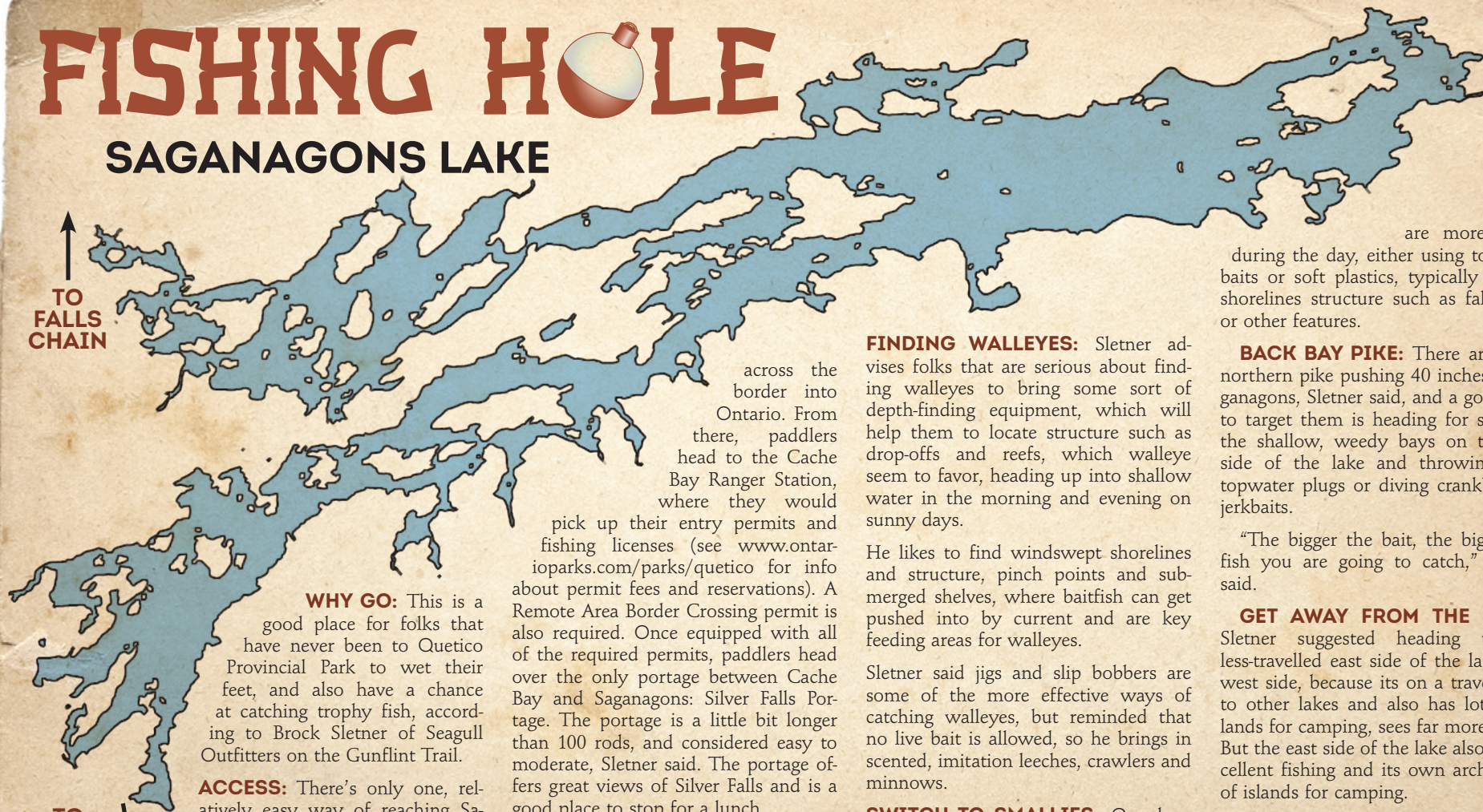


FISHING HOLE

SAGANAGONS LAKE



↑
TO
FALLS
CHAIN

↓
TO
CACHE
BAY

WHY GO: This is a good place for folks that have never been to Quetico Provincial Park to wet their feet, and also have a chance at catching trophy fish, according to Brock Sletner of Seagull Outfitters on the Gunflint Trail.

ACCESS: There's only one, relatively easy way of reaching Saganagons, Sletner said, and that's via Cache Bay on the northwest end of Saganaga Lake. Several outfitters offer a tow service to Hook Island, just

across the border into Ontario. From there, paddlers head to the Cache Bay Ranger Station, where they would

pick up their entry permits and fishing licenses (see www.ontarioparks.com/parks/quetico for info about permit fees and reservations). A Remote Area Border Crossing permit is also required. Once equipped with all of the required permits, paddlers head over the only portage between Cache Bay and Saganagons: Silver Falls Portage. The portage is a little bit longer than 100 rods, and considered easy to moderate, Sletner said. The portage offers great views of Silver Falls and is a good place to stop for a lunch.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike and lake trout.

FINDING WALLEYES: Sletner advises folks that are serious about finding walleyes to bring some sort of depth-finding equipment, which will help them to locate structure such as drop-offs and reefs, which walleye seem to favor, heading up into shallow water in the morning and evening on sunny days.

He likes to find windswept shorelines and structure, pinch points and submerged shelves, where baitfish can get pushed into by current and are key feeding areas for walleyes.

Sletner said jigs and slip bobbers are some of the more effective ways of catching walleyes, but reminded that no live bait is allowed, so he brings in scented, imitation leeches, crawlers and minnows.

SWITCH TO SMALLIES: On clear, sunny days, it's harder to catch walleyes, so Sletner said he'll focus his attention on smallmouth bass, which

are more active during the day, either using topwater baits or soft plastics, typically around shorelines structure such as falls trees or other features.

BACK BAY PIKE: There are some northern pike pushing 40 inches on Saganagons, Sletner said, and a good way to target them is heading for some of the shallow, weedy bays on the east side of the lake and throwing large topwater plugs or diving crankbaits or jerkbaits.

"The bigger the bait, the bigger the fish you are going to catch," Sletner said.

GET AWAY FROM THE PACK: Sletner suggested heading to the less-travelled east side of the lake. The west side, because it's on a travel route to other lakes and also has lots of islands for camping, sees far more traffic. But the east side of the lake also has excellent fishing and its own archipelago of islands for camping.