

FISHING HOLE WHITEFISH LAKE

WHY GO: It's a great, year-round fishing destination, and one of the more popular ice fishing destinations in the area, being one of the first lakes to freeze up in the winter despite its size at more than 11 square miles of surface area.

ACCESS: Though the lake sits just north of the U.S. border, accessing the lake requires a drive down Hwy. 588, a quick jaunt from Thunder Bay and west of the town of Nolalu, Ontario. But from Grand Marais, head over the border on Hwy. 61, then take a left on Hwy. 593 for about 30 miles, then take another left on Hwy. 588. There is a public boat access on the west side of the lake, and a few resorts on the lake also offer access.

VITALS: This 7,447-acre Ontario lake is about 6 miles north of the border, about 20 miles southwest of Thunder Bay and just west of Nolalu. It has a maximum depth of about 20 feet, but an average depth of 6.5 feet.

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

NICE 'EYES: A fish netting survey by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources found walleyes up to slightly over 28 inches, and there have been fish in the 10-pound range reported over the years. But the lake also has some good eater walleyes, as this long and shallow lake is a highly productive



walleye fishery. More than 40 percent of the fish surveyed in large mesh nets during that survey were 15 inches long. "It's very productive, lots of heavy weeds," said Allan Trochimchuk of Riverside Outdoors in Thunder Bay. He said anglers have reported walleyes up to 32 inches, though fish that size have eluded MNR nets.

EARLY ICE, NIGHT BITE: Trochimchuk said the lake is a good early ice walleye option, especially for night fishing. Typically, he and his fishing buddies will try to be on the ice by 3 p.m., and then fish into the night, say 7 or 8, or even as late as 11, if

the fishing is too good to stop. "A lot of times, you get a flurry before dark," he said. "Then it'll die off for an hour or two before picking up a bit."

They like to set large minnows and suckers, from 3 to 6 inches, on tip-ups in about five or six feet of water, trying to set up on the edges of weeds. The weeds can be thick on this lake.

Day fishing for walleye can be productive, too, but typically smaller fish are caught in

daylight. "We are looking for the big ones," he said.

DAY PERCH BITE: Quite a few anglers go there during the day for yellow perch. The lake was once a bigger draw for its yellow perch, Trochimchuk said, but anglers can still get into pockets of perch in the 10-inch range, he said. Anglers favor small jigs tipped with small minnows.

LOTS OF SMALLER PIKE: There's a lot of northern pike in the lake, but they're mostly small. The biggest pike in that MNR survey was the same size as the biggest walleye, for example, at about 28 inches. And pike are also a good target during the day, Trochimchuk said. "They are on the smaller side," he said. "But you can get into lots of numbers sometimes."