

FISHING HOLE

BEAN LAKE

WHY GO: For those with snowmobiles, it's an easy jaunt over to Bean, a designated trout lake with both splake and rainbow trout. The lake is popular with the local community, and is appreciated for its beauty.

ACCESS: This lake is entirely inside a portion of Tettegouche State Park that allows hunting, ATVs, snowmobiles and outboard motors. From Silver Bay, it's about a two-mile ride to Bean. There's trail access on C.R. 5. Those riding in on sleds don't need to pay the daily park fee. There are several hiking trails, for those with cross-country skis or snowshoes leading to this area, including the Superior Hiking Trail, which is about a four-mile hike from the closest parking lot inside the park. Regardless of how you get here, it's best to get your hands on a map of the state park or consult park staff. In the summer, some anglers trailer in small boats behind ATVs.

VITALS: This 31-acre lake in Lake County has a maximum depth of 26 feet. Water clarity is pretty good at 14.9 feet, according to the latest fisheries lake survey conducted in 2013. The lake is a mile northwest of Silver Bay.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Splake and rainbow trout.

FREQUENT STOCKING REGIMEN: Bean is stocked annually with about 1,000

rainbow trout yearlings. It receives varying amounts of splake fingerlings in odd years, most recently getting 1,684 little ones (42 pounds) in 2013.

That stocking regimen has produced decent results, even as young trout compete with white suckers.

Finland area fisheries supervisor Dean Paron said the latest survey turned up quite a few splake in the 12- to 14-inch range. There was also a lot of rainbow trout in the 9- to 11-inch range with a few in the 15-plus inch range. The largest surveyed was 17.5 inches and weighed 2.1 pounds, Paron said.

A GOOD OPENER OPTION: Paron said the lake is usually a good option for the first couple of weekends following the winter trout opener, which falls on Jan. 17 this year on lakes outside or partially outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

"Fish deeper for the splake, and closer to the surface for the rainbows," Paron said.

Jigs sized for panfish tipped with larvae or trout eggs should do the trick. There are some minnows in the lake, and some of the more voracious splake may feed on some of the smaller white suckers, but these trout are primarily feeding on bugs, Paron said.

TOO MANY SUCKERS: Paron said the lake's high population of white suckers has made it a possible candidate for reclamation. This year, in Cook County, three lakes, Kimball, Mink and Boys were reclaimed, meaning the lake was treated with rotenone, killing off all of the trout and competing fish, as well. In that case, it was yellow perch and rock bass. But as decent a trout hole as Bean and its neighbor, Bear (which has splake and a remnant lake trout population, by the way), could do even better sans those white suckers.

PACK IT OUT: Jordan Schafer, the operations supervisor for the state park, asks that anglers pack out their trash, which apparently has been an issue in the past. —Javier Serna

