

FISHING HOLE

WHY GO: Fish for several different species and camp with the family.

ACCESS: There is a federally owned concrete ramp on the west side of the lake with parking for 20 vehicles. From Tofte, head north on the Sawbill Trail (County 2) for 16 miles and take a right at FR 170. Follow for 8 miles, turning right into the U.S. Forest Service campground entrance. From Lutsen, take Caribou Trail (County 4) to FR 170 and then turn left into the entrance.

VITALS: This 744-acre lake in the Superior National Forest has a maximum depth of 28 feet and water clarity of 9.5 feet, according to Minnesota DNR.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Muskie, northern pike, walleye, smallmouth bass, yellow perch.

WHERE'S WALLEYE?: The DNR hasn't surveyed Crescent Lake since 2005, but Grand Marais area fisheries supervisor Steve Persons said it's a good sign that he hasn't heard any complaints from anglers about the lake.

Persons said the DNR is planning to survey the lake this summer, and he will be paying close attention to the walleye catch.

Smallmouth bass got into Crescent somehow in the 1990s, and it's unclear if they've had any impact on the lake's walleye population.

During that 2005 survey, the gill-net catch of walleye was low for the lake, but it still remained above average for the type of lake Crescent is, Persons said.

"We really want to take another look at it and see if they have bounced back up," he said. "If they have dropped lower, we will be quite concerned."

The lake's walleye population, which has been self-sustaining since 1976, when DNR last stocked the lake, is now completely natural, and 10-year classes were identified in that last survey, with one fish collected that was more than 25 inches long.

CAMP AND FISH: Superior National Forest has a 34-site campground on Crescent Lake, with one site that is accessible for people with disabilities, and a fishing pier.

CAST FOR THE FISH OF 10,000 CASTS: Crescent Lake also has a population of muskies, which have persisted despite being last stocked in 1979.

There aren't a lot of giants in the lake, by muskie standards, though, Persons said, noting that the lake was unfortunately stocked with the smaller-growing Shoepack strain of muskies.

In the last survey of the lake, only four muskies were collected that measured longer than 30 inches.

CAUTION NAVIGATING: Persons warned boaters to proceed cautiously on Crescent, which has dark water that can make it easy to miss troubled spots until it is too late.

"It is a very rocky lake," Persons said. "I have seen many outboards blasted out of the lake."

