

Fishing Hole DANIELS LAKE

Why go: It's one of the most easily accessible lake trout lakes inside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Access: Daniels is easiest accessed via the Gunflint Trail and entry point No. 61 on West Bearskin Lake. There is a 60-rod portage to Daniels directly north of the public boat ramp on West Bearskin Lake. The northeast corner of Daniels is but a few hundred yards from Canada. An 85-rod spur trail in the northeast corner of Daniels connects to the Border Route Trail.

Vitals: Daniels is 508 acres. It has a maximum depth of 90 feet, and, according to the Minnesota

DNR, the water clarity is 15 feet. It's a generally deep lake, with two deeper basins. One of those, on the western end of the lake, bottoms out at about 80 feet. From there, the lake shallows up to about 30 feet before dropping off to its deepest point, about halfway down the lake. The eastern side of the lake has a couple of 60 foot holes, as well as a 50-foot hole.

Game species present: lake trout, smallmouth bass, yellow perch.

Forage species present: white sucker.

Lake trout numbers, not lunkers:

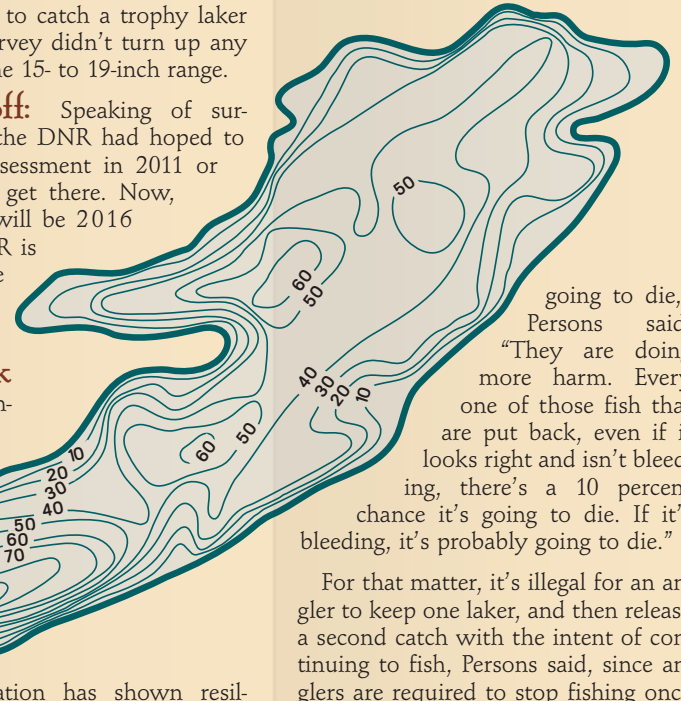
While the Minnesota DNR has not sampled the fish communities of Daniels since 2006, the lake continues to be known as a numbers lake, according to Steve Persons, Minnesota DNR's

Just don't expect to catch a trophy laker here. That latest survey didn't turn up any lakers larger than the 15- to 19-inch range.

Survey put off: Speaking of surveys, Persons said the DNR had hoped to do another lake assessment in 2011 or 2012, but couldn't get there. Now, it's looking like it will be 2016 or 2017 before DNR is able to sample the lake again.

Catch your limit and walk away: While Daniels' lake trout

- Inside the BWCAW
- Lake trout, smallmouth bass and yellow perch



going to die," Persons said. "They are doing more harm. Every one of those fish that are put back, even if it looks right and isn't bleeding, there's a 10 percent chance it's going to die. If it's bleeding, it's probably going to die."

For that matter, it's illegal for an angler to keep one laker, and then release a second catch with the intent of continuing to fish, Persons said, since anglers are required to stop fishing once in possession of the limit.

Using dead bait on tip-ups also tends to be harder on lake trout, since the fish typically has had more time to chew on the bait and is more likely to have a deep hook, Persons said. —Javier Serna



Grand Marais area fisheries manager.

"There's still a lot of people fishing there," Persons said. "Daniels is one of our more heavily fished lakes. It doesn't look like it's being overfished at this point. If it were to get overfished, we would expect for fish size to go down, and we haven't seen that."

population has shown resilience under heavier pressure than other lake trout lakes receive, Persons said anglers can play a conservation role by catching their two fish limit and leaving, rather than trying to cull for larger trout.

"If a person is releasing a lot of lake trout, you have to realize a lot of those fish are

