

FISHING HOLE JACKPINE RIVER

WHY GO: The Jackpine River is a popular stream among anglers, supporting a healthy spring run of steelhead, which peaks between April and May, depending on the conditions, according to Kyle Rogers, management biologist for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Upper Great Lakes Management Unit.

ACCESS: Much of the land surrounding the Jackpine River is Crown land and open to the public. There are several access points on the west side of the river, downstream of Hwy. 17.

VITALS: The Jackpine River is 67 kilometers long (about 41 miles). This Ontario river starts southeast of Lake Nipigon, draining a watershed area of about 176 square miles. The Jackpine has a high gradient, with a mean slope of nine percent, and thus flows fast and clear. It empties into Lake Superior's Nipigon Bay, just east of Kama Point on Hwy. 17.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Steelhead trout, coaster brook trout, pink salmon, coho salmon and rainbow smelt.

APRIL AND MAY: As mentioned by Rogers, the stream is a good place for steelhead fishing in the spring. It is known for supporting a significant run of wild steelhead, and from a steelheader's standpoint, is mainly a spring river. High water

in 1996 reduced one of the best spots, the Slide Pool, to a riffle, and much of the best water below the bridge has been degraded. There are still pockets of holding water for fish. Anglers might be best off heading upstream to find spawning fish. Generally, because of thicker ice on Nipigon Bay, the runs east of Nipigon are a little later than the streams emptying into Thunder Bay. The best Jackpine steelhead runs are often in the middle of May.

The Jackpine is small and swift, compared to another nearby steelhead destination, the Cypress River, and its steep gradient provides extra challenge for those hooked into a steelhead.

The Jackpine also has a run of rainbow smelt in the spring, Rogers noted.

COASTERS: Rogers said the Jackpine receives a spawning run of Lake Superior "coaster" brook trout between late September and October. The brook trout season, however, closes on Labor Day to protect spawning fish.

FALL SALMON RUNS: There's a pink salmon run on the Jackpine that typically goes from late August into September, Rogers said. Coho salmon also run the river from late September into October, he added.—*Javier Serna*

