

FISHING HOLE

JESSIE LAKE

WHY GO: It's a destination for brook trout and lake trout, where there's a chance for catching trophies of either species.

ACCESS: There are four access points on the lake. There's a boat launch (as well as a vault privy) located at Birch Point, near the south end of the lake. This is a day use area only. All access points are located on the west side of the lake, off Hwy. 585. Head north on Hwy. 585 from Hwy. 17, just west of Nipigon. The north end access has a fish cleaning station. And there are two accesses on Male Creek, one on the north side of the stream and the other on the south side.

VITALS: Jessie Lake, northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario, is a widening of the Nipigon River, located between two power dams,

Pine Portage dam to the north and Cameron Falls to the south. It's a 2,311-acre lake with a maximum depth of 140 feet and an average depth of 44 feet.

FISH SPECIES PRESENT: Brook trout, burbot, lake trout, lake whitefish, round whitefish, white sucker, lake herring and rainbow smelt. Historic records indicate the presence of walleye, sauger, yellow perch and northern pike, though none of these species have been observed for years.

TROUT ACTION: According to Tom Savioja, a fish and wildlife technical specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the section of the Nipigon River, between Pine Portage dam and the north end of Jessie Lake, is very good for both lake trout and brook trout. This section of

the river is only accessible by boat from Jessie Lake. The brook trout season is open from the last Saturday in April to Labor Day. The standard limit for brookies is one fish, which must be greater than 22 inches. The conservation limit is zero. For lake trout, the standard limit is two, with only one greater than 22 inches from Sept. 1-30, and no size limit the rest of the year. The conservation limit is one fish, with no size limit.

ICE ACCESS: Jessie is very popular for ice fishing for lake trout, Savioja said. That's because there's generally easy access in the winter, with Hwy.

585 being plowed, allowing walk-in access for ice anglers.

SPRING SMELTING: There's a dip net fishery for rainbow smelt on two creeks that cross Hwy. 585 on the west side of the lake, Savioja said. The creeks are located at about mid-lake.

TAKE A LOAD OFF: Overnight camping is permitted at the four mentioned access points.—*Javier Serna*

